YOUNG WOMEN

IN NOVA SCOTIA

A STUDY OF ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOUR AND ASPIRATIONS

By Dian Day

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women has become increasingly aware of the difficulties faced by adolescents during a time when our society is changing rapidly.

Growing unemployment and inflation of educational requirements for many jobs, combined with the increasing competition and expense of entering university, make the job market particularly unstable for young people.[1] Child abuse, dating abuse, and sexual assault make headlines daily, but few inroads have been made to lessen this tide of violence, and few services exist to help young women deal with these events should they occur in their lives. More young women want professional careers, egalitarian marriages, shared housework, and problem-free childcare than did women of their mothers' generation; at the same time there still exists a profound contradiction between young women's desires and expectations and the realities they will face both at home and in the world of work.

The principal objective of this research endeavour is to examine and describe a significant number of broad issues affecting young women in Nova Scotia in terms of lifestyle, attitudes, and future aspirations. More specifically, we seek to:

- identify attitudes and opinions of female high school students towards the various issues being examined;
- assess and compare similarities and differences in attitudes, opinions, and future plans;
- identify specific areas of concern to these young women, in terms of present reality and future plans;
- gather data that will help the government of Nova Scotia more accurately address the problems faced by young women and thus to aid in planning future programs;
- make recommendations for change based on our research findings;
- provide background material for a handbook aimed at providing young women with accurate information about the realities of their world and to assist them in making realistic and responsible decisions about their lives.

FOOTNOTE

1 Young people aged 15–24 face the highest unemployment rate in the country (20%). Among full-time labour force participants women generally experience the greatest difficulty in finding employment. Statistics Canada, *Canadian Social Trends*, Autumn 1987, Catalogue 11-008E.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

SAMPLING FRAME

The sampling frame for this study consisted of female students attending grade 10 and grade 12 classes at high schools throughout the province of Nova Scotia during the fall of 1989. Grade 10 and 12 classes were chosen to allow for some age/grade comparisons with regard to attitudes and future plans and aspirations. We decided to survey young women only to enable us to gather as large a sample as possible of those individuals who fall directly under our mandate as the Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

DATA-GATHERING INSTRUMENT

It was decided that questionnaires would be the optimum tool for gaining a wide variety of information from a large number of students. Interviews alone were impractical for obtaining a sufficient number of respondents, both in terms of time and money. However, the questionnaires do include a number of open-ended questions in an attempt to incorporate some of the richness and depth of verbatim quotes into an otherwise structured questionnaire.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The sample was selected by randomly choosing schools across the province to reflect an appropriate mix of rural and urban adolescents with various socioeconomic backgrounds. Once the schools had been selected, individual classrooms within the school were randomly chosen for administration of the survey. School boards that had jurisdiction over the selected schools were sent copies of the survey for approval. The Cape Breton District School Board would not allow the questions involving sex education, sexual activity, and birth control use, and so a version of the survey without these questions was administered to five schools there. The Antigonish District School Board would not allow us to administer the survey at all, and the approximately 40 students selected from two schools in the area were unable to participate.

Advisory Council staff and Council members administered the survey in the fall of 1989, remaining in the classrooms for the approximately 45 minutes required to complete the questionnaire, and were on hand to answer any questions respondents may have had.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire was designed in close consultation with the Gorsebrook Research Institute, the Department of Education, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, and the Literacy Council of Nova Scotia. A number of the questions arose from material included in a study conducted in 1985 by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.[1]

The questions covered included background information such as family status, parental education and occupation, and school data such as grade and course levels, school subjects, and use of guidance counsellors. Other questions addressed the young women's desired and expected educational and employment plans after high school, perceived obstacles to expected careers, employment plans with regard to family planning, expected age of marriage and number of children wanted, as well as views on childcare, housework, and divorce.

Questions regarding sexuality included sex education in school, discussion with parents, sexual activity, birth control use, and personal choice in the event of accidental pregnancy. Attitudes towards boyfriends' rights and the issue of dating abuse were addressed.

Also included were specific questions regarding the respondents' height and weight, as

well as questions on dieting and alcohol, cigarette, and drug usage. The need by these young women for specific information was investigated, as well as the medium desired to relay the information.

Finally, open-ended questions were asked regarding the respondents' definition of a feminist and any other comments that the young women may have wanted to make.

Pretest

A pretest was conducted by Advisory Council staff on nine grade 9 girls prior to the data collection stage. No revisions were thought to be necessary.

Coding

The coding and entering of the data into a computer file followed the data collection, and many of the open-ended questions were coded into a large number of categories to allow for a maximum range of codes. All open-ended questions were also reviewed by a team of researchers to record interesting or significant verbatim responses to add depth to the statistical data. A selection of these responses appears in the text.

FOCUS GROUPS

In addition to the questionnaire, four focus groups were held with young women in different areas of the province to further supplement the statistical data.

The final page of each questionnaire was a tear-off sheet asking respondents if they would be interested in participating in follow-up discussion groups on any of the topics covered in the survey. If so, the student was asked to write her name, phone number, and address on the sheet, remove it from the survey, and place it in a sealed envelope to be collected separately from the questionnaires.

Schools where a minimum of 12 respondents expressed interest in the sessions were chosen, as we felt there were sure to be some young women who would change their minds or who would have other commitments on the day of the focus group. Sessions were held in November 1989 with six participants at Cobequid Education Centre in Truro, in December with nine participants at Pictou Academy, and in January 1990 with nine participants at Cole Harbour High School and with eight participants at Windsor Regional High School.

The focus groups achieved a good mix of rural, town, and urban dwellers, grades 10 and 12 students, and academic and general stream students. Unfortunately, no Black, Native, or disabled students came to the focus groups. Topics covered included educational, employment, and family goals, and sexuality and relationship issues as introduced in the questionnaire.

The sessions, led by a research consultant, were tape recorded and later transcribed. Some of this material also appears in the text.

SAMPLE SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

The number of students in attendance during the days on which the survey was administered totalled 1,655.

From Table 1 we can see that, comparatively, the sample closely resembles the larger provincial population with regard to geographical location, language spoken, and ethnicity. The results from this study can therefore reasonably be generalized to other young women in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, the Black and Native respondents were too few in number to provide reliable data from cross-tabulations.

The following demographic variables are useful for giving an overview of the sample being analyzed.

Table 1: Sample Population

		Sample	General Population	
Geographic Location	Rural	42%	Rural	46.0%*
	Town	21%		
	Urban	37%	Urban	54.0%*
Mother Tongue	English	93%	English	94.7%**
	French	4%	French	3.5%**
	Other	3%	Other	1.8%**
Ethnicity	British or European	73%		
	Black	1%	Black	0.9%*
	Native	2%	Native	0.7%*
	Other	1%		
	Don't know/ No answer	22%		

* Statistics Canada, Subprovincial Data For Nova Scotia, March 1989.

** Statistics Canada Census Data 1986.

Figure 1: Thirty-four per cent of respondents were 14–15 years of age, 48% were 16–17 years of age, and 18% were 18 years of age and older.

Figure 2: Fifty-one per cent of the young women were grade 10 students, 47% were grade 12 students, and 2% were grade 11 students who were taking at least one grade 10 or grade 12 class.

Figure 3: The majority of the students took academic (university preparatory) courses.

Figure 1: Age of Participants

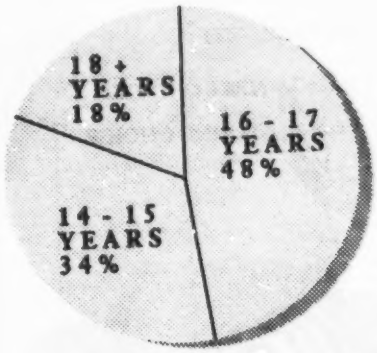


Figure 2: Current Grade Level

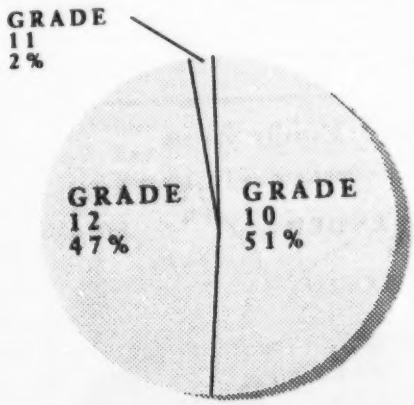


Figure 3: Academic Standing

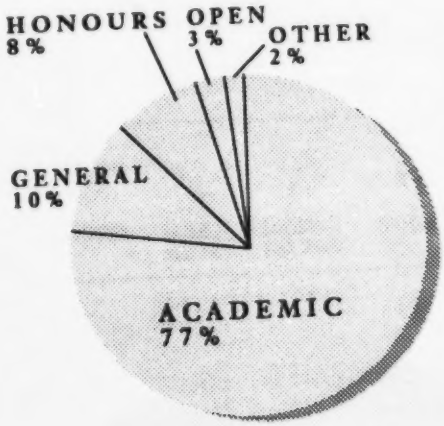


Figure 4: **Best-Liked School Subjects**

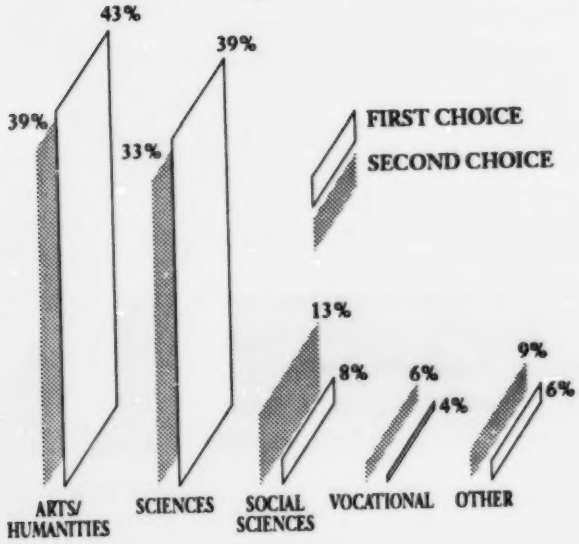


Figure 4: Respondents chose courses in the arts/humanities (43%) and the sciences (39%) as their first and second choice of best-liked school subjects (39% and 33% respectively for second choice).

Figure 5: **Family Status**

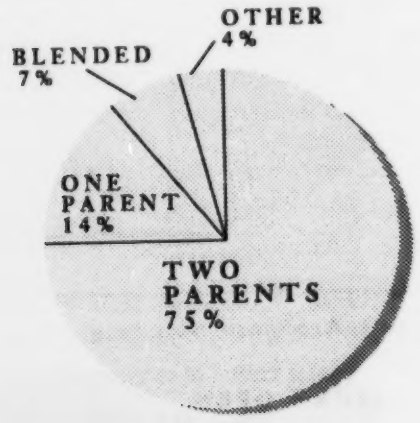


Figure 5: The majority of the respondents (75%) came from two-parent families, with 14% from one-parent families, 7% from blended families (mother and step-father, or father and step-mother), and 4% from "other" types of families. The latter category includes young women who live with grandparents or other relatives, foster parents, boyfriend's parents, or in group homes. For the purposes of this study "parent," "mother," and "father" are assumed to mean biological parent, step-parent, or other male or female guardian with whom the young woman is living.

Figure 6: The greatest percentage of respondents have parents who did not complete high school (38% of the female parents and 43% of the male parents). Over half (63%) of the mothers and fathers of the young women in this study have a high school education or less. However, there are gender differences in the parent's level of education. Mothers are more likely to have completed high school (25% vs 20%) but less likely to have been to university than the fathers (18% vs 22%), which parallels women's and men's educational achievement in the general population.[2]

Figure 7: The majority of these young women's parents are employed (68% of the mothers and 91% of the fathers). Slightly more than one-quarter (26%) of the mothers are homemakers.

Figure 6: Education Status of Parents/Guardians

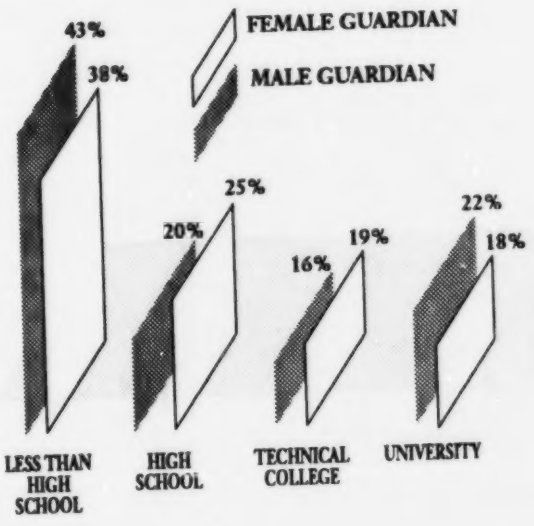


Figure 7: Employment Status of Parents/Guardians

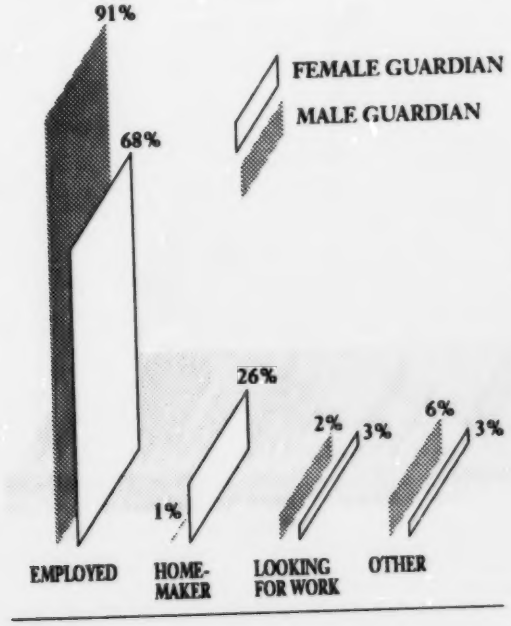
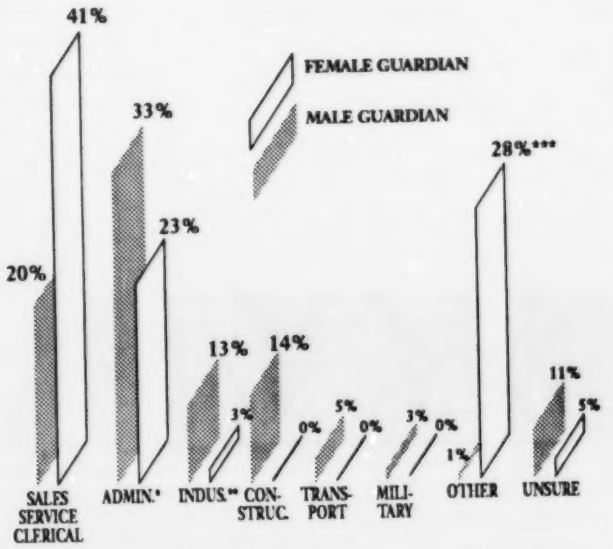


Figure 8: **Occupation of Parents/Guardians**



* Includes professional and administrative
** Includes Primary Industry and Manufacturing
***Most of these are homemakers. See Table 7

Figure 8: Significant gender differences also exist in the types of occupations held by the young women's parents. The largest group of the respondents' mothers are in sales, service, or clerical occupations (41%), while the largest group of their fathers are in managerial, professional, or administrative occupations (33%).

FOOTNOTES

1 Maureen Baker, *"What Will Tomorrow Bring? . . .," A Study of the Aspirations of Adolescent Women*, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, March 1985.

2 Statistics Canada Census Data 1986, *The Nation: Schooling by Major Field of Study*, Catalogue 93-110.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS

Fifty-eight per cent of the young women in the study are planning to enter university immediately after high school (see Figure 9). Unfortunately, there is no clear data on the number of female high school graduates in Nova Scotia who enter university the year following high school graduation, but only about 1 in 10 women (aged 25–44) in the province currently holds a university degree.[1]

Comparing young women 18 years of age and older who have definite educational plans to those 16–17 years old and 14–15 years old, we find that women 18 years of age and older are slightly more likely to say they will get a job (10% vs 4% and 1% respectively), work and then return to school (11% vs 9% and 7%), or go to technical college (26% vs 18% and 11%). However, those 18 and over are much less likely to say they will go to university than the younger high school girls (42% vs 57% and 69%, see Figure 10).

If younger women have unrealistic expectations of going on to university, this trend for the older students can be interpreted as a healthy sense of reality gained with age. More negatively, it can be seen as an increase in the barriers, or an increase in awareness of the barriers that young women face in achieving their educational aspirations.

Young women whose mothers or fathers have a university education are the most likely to say they are planning to go to university (table not shown). Eighty-three per cent of the young women whose mothers have attended university say they plan to go to university,[2] while 81% of the young women whose fathers have attended university say they plan to go.[3] It is interesting to note that there is a slightly stronger correlation with the mother's university education than with the father's. Young women whose mothers or fathers have less than a high school education are more likely to have plans that do not include university or post-secondary education.[4]

Figure 9: Plans after High School

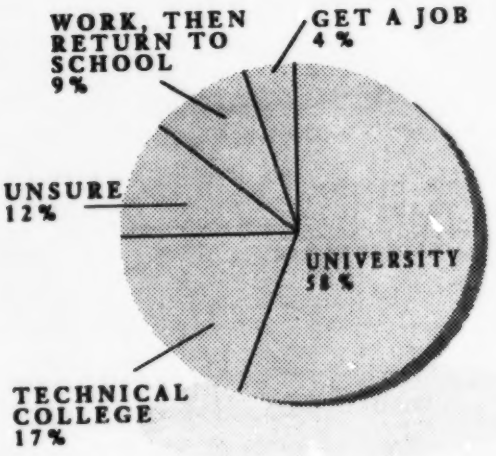


Figure 10: Plans after High School by Age

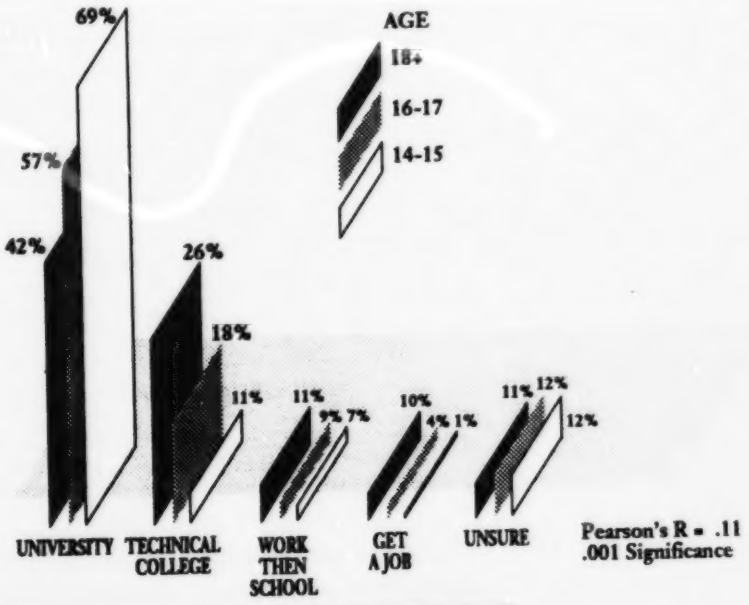


Figure 11: **Field of Study after High School**

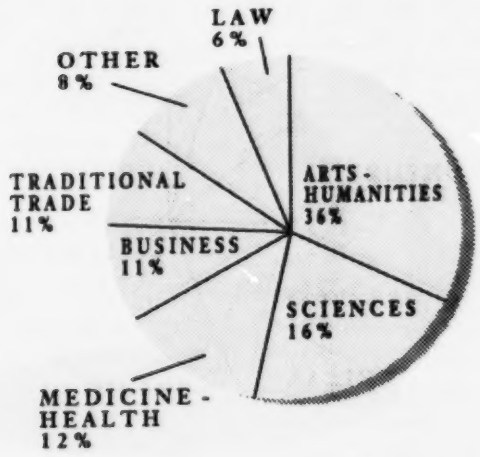
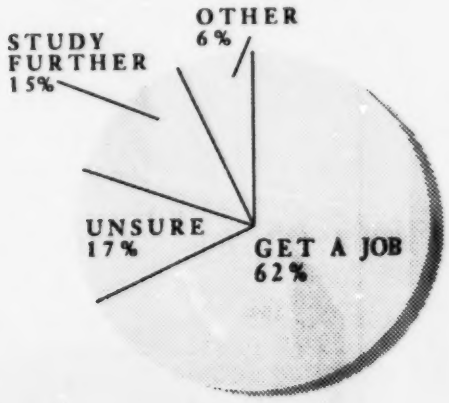


Figure 12: **Plans after Completion of Post-Secondary Program or Degree**



The subjects young women plan to study in post-secondary institutions are consistent with current enrolment patterns in universities, colleges, and vocational schools in Nova Scotia (see Figure 11).[5]

In many cases, however, young women's selected courses of study do not mesh with their occupational goals. Many students are still unsure of the connection between specific educational programs and specific careers.

I know what I want to do, and I know where I want to go, but I haven't got a clue what I'm supposed to take.

Town focus group

A majority of respondents (62%) say they will get a job after the completion of their post-secondary program or degree (see Figure 12). Fifteen per cent of the young women in the study (or almost one-quarter of those who say they will go to university) intend to pursue advanced university studies. Fewer than one-eighth of female university graduates currently do so.[6]

For the young women in the study, the most popular "desired" career choices "if nothing got in your way" are high-level professional occupations such as law and medicine (19%, see Table 2). It is important to note, however, that many young women specified a more traditional "feminine" aspect of a non-traditional or professional occupation, for example, "baby doctor," "child psychologist," "elementary school teacher," or "lawyer (family law)." The occupations most of the young women "expect" to have are as helping professionals (13%), in the field of teaching (13%), and clerical, sales and service (12%). Many of these grade 10 and 12 students, however, are unsure of the job or occupation they "expect" to have in the future (20%).

Aspirations Versus Expectations

One of the most disturbing aspects of this study is the discrepancy that emerges between the career a young woman most "wants" and the career she most "expects." In almost every professional occupation, consistently fewer young women expect to have the occupation they most desire. More young women expect to be teachers, childcare workers, aids, homemakers, work in business or with computers, or in clerical, sales, and service (all more traditional occupations for women) than desire any of these occupations. Even so, fewer

Table 2: Desired and Expected Occupations

Occupation	Desired	Expected
High Level Professionals (Lawyers, Doctors, Pharmacists) and Politicians	19 %	8%
Helping Professionals (Nurses, Physiotherapists, Social Workers, Veterinarians)	16	13
Teachers	11	13
Science Professionals (Scientists, Psychologists, Architects, Engineers, Marine Biologists)	10	6
Entertainment, Travel, and Fashion Industry	10	3
Artists, Writers, and Journalists	6	4
Clerical, Sales, and Service	5	12
Business and Computer Professionals and Employees	4	7
Police and Armed Forces	4	3
Childcare Workers, Nursing, Teaching, and Vet Assistants	3	4
Medical Technicians	2	2
Homemakers	>1	2
Non-Traditional Trades and Occupations	1	>1
Other	4	3
Unsure	5	20

young women expect clerical occupations—at present the largest occupational category for women in Nova Scotia[7]—than are likely to hold these jobs in the future.

Fully 44% of the young women lower their expectations when they talk of the career they most expect to have in the future (see Table 3). For some, this shift is relatively minimal (wanting to be a psychologist, expecting to be a social worker or teacher, for example); for many, the shift is more drastic, sometimes in a related field (doctor to nurse), and sometimes completely unrelated (lawyer to hairdresser). Of those who want careers in the entertainment, travel, or fashion industry (actress, for example), most state their expected career will be a professional one (psychologist, for example). The latter responses were treated as lateral shifts in expectation.

Table 3: Agreement Between Desired and Expected Occupations

Drop in expectation (i.e. lawyer to secretary, doctor to nurse)	44%
Exact or very similar (i.e. RCMP officer to police woman)	41%
Lateral shift (i.e. teacher to social worker)	8%
Expectation greater than desire	1%
Unsure for both desired and expected occupation	2%
Other	4%

The drop in young women's career expectations is particularly striking when we compare the huge discrepancies between the broad range of professional, well-paying[8] and challenging roles they can imagine for themselves and the traditional, low-paying, dead-end jobs they expect:

musician ... waitress. Urban, grade 10
lawyer ... maid. Rural, grade 12
cop ... cashier. Town, grade 10
drug counsellor ... mother and wife. Town, grade 10
pilot ... hairdresser. Town, grade 10
bartender ... waitress. Rural, grade 12
teacher ... minimum wage job. Rural, grade 12
doctor ... nurse. Urban, grade 12
psychiatrist ... waitress. Town, grade 10
astronomer ... flight attendant. Urban, grade 10
RCMP ... secretary. Rural, grade 12

Once again, we can speculate that this drop in expectations indicates that these young women know what jobs are really open to them; in other words, they have a sense of reality about their futures that can be interpreted either positively or negatively—if they know the job market is limited, they will be prevented from experiencing a lot of frustration in pursuing

careers that are difficult or unobtainable; or they surrender their ideals far too soon instead of fighting for equality in the work world.

One-fifth of the young women simply do not know what occupation they would like to pursue after graduation from high school, community college, trade school, or university.

I'm not sure what I'm going to be doing in the next ten years. When I get out of school, I know I want to go to college or university or something, but I'm not sure what I want to do. And I know I want to get married within ten years and have kids. I want to already start my family by then. But besides that, I'm not sure where I'll be.
Town focus group

When you think about what you're gonna be doing the rest of your life, it scares me, 'cause I have no idea what I'm gonna do.
Urban focus group

Certainly, many of us would not have been able to predict our present occupations while we ourselves were grade 10 or grade 12 students; however, in a high school and post-secondary system that is geared toward greater streaming and specialization, and in a more and more competitive job market, not knowing has grave implications for young women's occupational attainments.

Career Obstacles

The young women involved in this study perceive that they could face a variety of obstacles in pursuing a career (see Table 4). Lack of money, amount of education required, and children (generally assumed soon after marriage) are the top three concerns.

I don't think I'll be able to do what I want. Probably marrying, and having children, and just being tied down, and that. Because once you get children coming, it's no picnic.
Town focus group

Table 4: Perceived Obstacles to Career*

Lack of Money	35%
Amount of Education Required	31%
Nothing	29%
Children	24%
Marriage	13%
Lack of Information	10%
Boyfriend	7%
Parents	4%
Friends	1%
Other	15%

*Only yes answers to each yes/no question

I don't think I want a family right now. I've seen too many families break up. My parents have been divorced and remarried numbers of times, and I have three brothers and three sisters, and I think that would get in the way of doing what I want to do.
Town focus group

Once you get married, that's about it.
Rural focus group

While these young women may assert that "nothing happens after marriage," few have analyzed this in terms of their own expectations. Rather, they approach their futures as if they were passive participants in their own lives, unable to make choices, accepting the "inevitable."

Ten years down the road, I could say that I'll be somewhere, but I mean you never know. You don't know what's going to happen. You could meet a man, and that's it. It all depends.
Town focus group

In the "other" category, common answers involve expressing a lack of talent, intelligence, ambition, or self-esteem:

It is an extremely difficult field to get into (fighter pilot) and they are very tough on women. (I'm not good enough.)
Urban, grade 12

Not having the brain or not being smart enough to be accepted anywhere.
Town, grade 10

To become a singer you have to have the talent and personality. I think I have the talent and personality, but I am unsure.
Urban, grade 10

I kept playing the game. I was trying to get better, trying to get better. And now I'm in grade 12, and there's no next term that's gonna be better. I have to come back [to grade 12] next year.
Urban focus group

Sexism is recognized by a few young women as an obstacle to attaining their chosen career.

being female.
Urban, grade 12

Maybe if I want a job that a man could have, I'm not sure what it's like now, but it seems to have caused problems before. You know, if they might hire a man over me.
Rural focus group

If I don't really like trucking, I'll always have the secretarial to fall back on. My father really isn't too keen on my driving a truck for a living, so I'll probably have an office job ... I think he'd probably like it better for me to be doing a normal job.
Rural focus group

A number of young women, particularly those living in rural areas, indicated that their location would prevent them from getting a good job, or in some cases, any job at all.

a writer and actor ... nothing if I stay here.
Town, grade 10

dietitian ... probably just a housewife, not much jobs for women with money in this county.
Town, grade 10

Unfortunately, we did not ask young women if they felt they could pursue their chosen career in their own area or if they would be willing to move in order to get the education/career that they wanted, so we have no way of knowing how widespread this feeling is. There seems to be an indication, in some of their verbatim responses on the questionnaires and in the focus groups, of a general unwillingness to move from rural areas and an acceptance that they will "take what they can get" when it comes to jobs, rather than making occupational or "career" choices that involve moving.

Young women who are planning to attend university are more likely than those with other post-high school plans to feel that nothing would be an obstacle to their careers (35%, see Table 5). The young women who plan to get a job immediately after high school are more likely to believe that they face a variety of obstacles to their careers (marriage 19%, children 32%, parents 13%, education 51%) than those with other plans.[9]

Young women who are unsure of their plans after high school and those who are planning to work and then return to school are most likely to see money as an obstacle to their career (44% and 50% respectively). Young women who plan to go to university are the least likely to see any of the above as obstacles; a greater percentage chose the "other" category, which included many self-esteem types of responses.

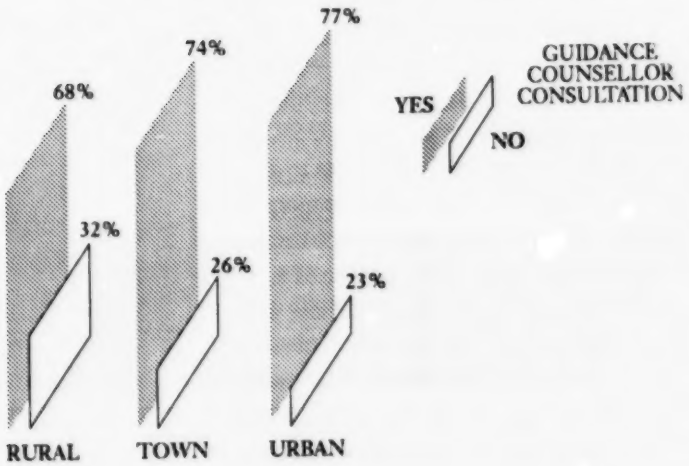
Table 5: **Plans after High School by Perceived Obstacles to Career***

		Plans after High School						
		Unsure	Job	Work Then School	Tech. College	University	Cramer's V.	Significance
OBSTACLES	Marriage	16%	19%	11%	17%	11%	.09	.05
	Children	30%	32%	28%	24%	21%	.09	.05
	Parents	6%	13%	6%	4%	3%	.11	.001
	Boyfriend	16%	11%	9%	9%	4%	.17	.001
	Money	44%	33%	50%	38%	31%	.13	.001
	Information	15%	16%	17%	14%	7%	.13	.001
	Education	41%	51%	36%	42%	24%	.19	.001
	Other	13%	3%	14%	8%	18%	.13	.001
	Nothing	20%	18%	19%	20%	35%	.17	.001

*Only yes answers to each yes/no question

As may be expected, children are more likely to be seen to be an obstacle to a chosen career by those young women who are planning to stop work for childrearing (table not shown).[10]

Figure 13: **Guidance Counsellor Consultation by Location**



GUIDANCE

Almost three-quarters of the young women in the study have been to see a school guidance counsellor (73%), and urban young women are more likely to have seen a guidance counsellor than their rural or town peers (see Figure 13).

However, in many schools, students are required to get the guidance counsellor's consent for their course choices and/or changes, so it is difficult to determine how many of these young women went only because they had to. Certainly, the main reason these students went to guidance counsellors was to make subject choices, rather than to discuss career choices or personal problems (see Figure 14). The young women's plans after high school did not influence whether they wanted information on careers or career counselling, another indication that consultation may not have been voluntary in most cases (table not shown).

Personal and "other" problems (often associated with problems of friends or family members) are the least likely to be matters for discussion with a guidance counsellor.

I found them helpful for school and careers, but not for personal problems because they didn't seem to help solve my problems any, they were too pushy with things that they thought I should do.
Urban, grade 12

While 79 per cent of the students who have been to a guidance counsellor say that it was helpful (table not shown), many of those who are dissatisfied express strong negative feelings about the individual counsellor or about the counselling process. Several students pleaded "Change our guidance counsellor!" Like the young woman quoted above, many others are clear that counselling should enable the student to make her own choices, rather than be dictated to by the counsellor.

He seems to think the only way to do things is his way and doesn't explain things clearly.
Town, grade 12

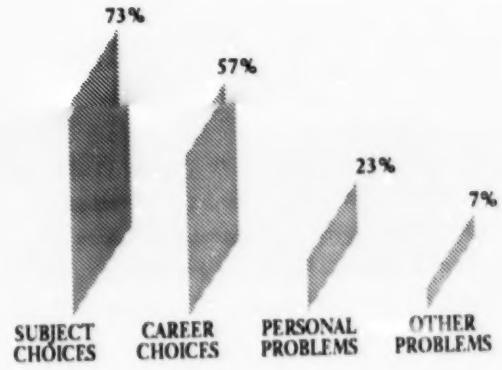
He didn't really listen and was trying to make choices for me. I would say I wanted to take a subject in a certain level and he wouldn't let me. Until I got my mom to tell him.
Urban, grade 10

Despite the fact that counsellors are guided by a code of ethics and confidentiality set out by the Department of Education, some students feel betrayed by their guidance counsellors for breaking confidentiality to both parents and teachers:[11]

She was too nosey, and told all of the teachers about my problems.
Urban, grade 12

I found her nosey and she always went behind my back and called my mother about our conversation.
Urban, grade 10

Figure 14: Topic of Discussion during Guidance Counsellor Consultation*



* Only yes answers to each yes/no question

I told my counsellor something and he told that teacher what I said about him.
Urban, grade 10

Other common themes include "s/he doesn't know what s/he's talking about," "s/he made me feel stupid," and "s/he's too busy."

He wouldn't listen to what I had to say and acted like it wasn't important.
Urban, grade 12

He wasn't at all open to my thoughts and ambitions, and he treated me like an idiot because I want to write fiction.
Town, grade 12

She said during a subject choice to "flip a coin." Great advice!
Urban, grade 12

Seems uninformed so that I don't realize the amount of opportunities I have.
Town, grade 10

Our guidance counsellor is never here, and he's always busy.
Rural, grade 10

Some students had observations that are very serious indeed.

I put in an application to see [the guidance counsellor], and I never got any response, and then I went down and asked him why. And he says, "Well, I've got things to do. I've got the university people to take care of."
Rural focus group

He doesn't have the time to see very many people, and he is drunk half the time.
Rural, grade 10

Many senior high school students make it clear that whatever counselling they have received, they remain ill-prepared to make the educational and career choices that will be required of them in the near future.

In terms of careers, I don't have any information about where I'm going or what I want to get into, or what it involves, what subjects I have to take. I've gone to guidance counsellors, and they haven't really told me much.
Rural focus group

FOOTNOTES

1 Statistics Canada Census Data 1986, *The Nation: Schooling by Major Field of Study*, Catalogue 93-110.
2 Pearson's R = .25 / .001 Significance
3 Pearson's R = .23 / .001 Significance
4 Pearson's R = .25 / .001 Significance for mother's education, and Pearson's R = .23 / .001 Significance for father's education.
5 Statistics Canada, *Education in Canada*, Catalogue 81-229.
6 Statistics Canada, *Education in Canada*, Catalogue 81-229.
7 Statistics Canada Census Data 1986, *Dimensions: Occupational Trends*, Catalogue 93-151.
8 Participants in one of the focus groups were asked how much they expected to earn in their first year of work. Answers ranged from $25,000 to $45,000.
9 Pearson's R = .14 / .001 level of significance.
10 Cramer's V = .19 / .001 level of significance.
11 Nova Scotia Department of Education, Guidance in Nova Scotia Schools, *Curriculum Development Teaching Guide No. III*, 1988, p.38.

SEXUALITY

SEX EDUCATION

The vast majority of young women in this study have had sex education classes in school—94%—most of them in grades 7, 8, or 9 (see Figure 15).

Many concerns are expressed about the quality and depth of these classes, however.

I would really like a better sex ed course. We didn't get any information on how to protect ourselves (really). We only learned body parts and what happens after we get pregnant.
Rural, grade 10

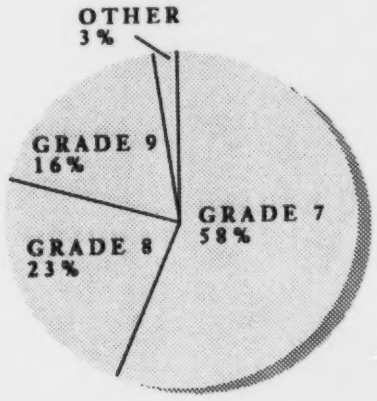
Sex ed is only discussed briefly in school. The feelings that go along with sex are never talked about.
Urban, grade 10

Kids should be informed better about sex and protection at a younger age and just not one class, maybe a week thing once a year at the junior high level. There are so many young girls pregnant.
Urban, grade 12

Me and my boyfriend, we've been having problems with sex, and that, and there's a lot of stuff I didn't know, and I've had to find out just lately. And you wonder about some stuff, and there's no one to get it from. And most of the stuff isn't stuff you learn in sex education classes, or anything like that. It's deeper, sort of. I wouldn't go to my parents. I'd be too embarrassed.
Rural focus group

If you asked a question about [sex or AIDS], they'd turn three shades of red, and go on to something else.
Rural focus group

Figure 15: Grade at Which Sex Education Taken



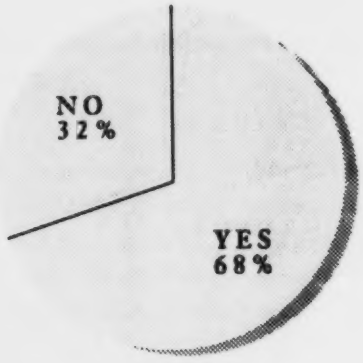
On the other hand, young women who have not had sex education in school are slightly more likely to want information on birth control (table not shown),[1] an indication that at least some of the information contained in the curriculum is meeting students' needs. There is no significant difference in the numbers of young women wanting information about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), regardless of whether or not they have had sex education classes.

Two-thirds of the students have talked to their parents about sex, although we have no way of knowing how in-depth their discussions were, nor even if they involved accurate and up-to-date information (see Figure 16).

Unfortunately, often parent-child "discussions" are explanations regarding menstruation and biological changes, or directives about abstaining from sexual behaviour issued by the parents, with dire warnings (sometimes true) about what will surely happen to transgressors.

This is kind of embarrassing. I'm 17, and the first time I ever had sex was this year. I told my mother about it, but my parents

Figure 16: **Talked to Parents about Sex**



aren't very understanding. That's why she said If I get pregnant, it's my fault. Because like we're not taking any precautions at all. I'm not on the pill, and he won't use a condom.

Rural focus group

If you do get in trouble, it's your own fault because you know [about birth control], and you've been warned by your mother.

Rural focus group

For some young women, their parents' concern that they are "doing something" may provide them with a much-needed opportunity to connect with their parents about *any* subject.

Me and my parents are getting closer now that they know me and my boyfriend are doing something. I never told them I slept with him because I'm only 15. When I'm 16 I'm asking Mom if I can go on the pill. My father talks more with me and he told me the other day that he cared lots. I'm glad we're getting closer.

Rural, grade 10

Young women who have had sex education classes are more likely to have talked to their parents about sex.[2] Young women from blended families are also slightly more likely to have talked to their parents about sex (tables not shown).[3]

Some students felt the questions on the survey regarding their sexual activity were "too personal"—particular school classes were more apt to say this, perhaps prompted by something a particular teacher, or the survey administrator, said to students about not having to answer questions they did not feel comfortable with. However, students generally answered the questions even if they stated they were too personal.

On the other hand, far from being seen as "too personal," several young women were upset that they did not have the opportunity to answer these same questions. As discussed earlier, the Cape Breton District School Board would not allow the questions about sex education and sexual activity to remain in the survey, and a version of the survey without the controversial questions was administered there. This elicited a number of irate comments from students in the area.

I am angry that the school board would not let some of the questions appear in this survey. If they aren't going to help young girls, they shouldn't stop anyone else!

Rural, grade 12

SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Over half of the young women surveyed have had sex with a boy or a man (52%, see Figure 17). This is comparable to the findings of other recent studies.[4]

Only .5% of the young women have had sex with a girl or a woman (table not shown). However, same-sex sexual activity may begin

later in life than opposite-sex sexual activity for young women since the pressures that young women face to conform to heterosexuality are great and feelings understandably take some time to sort out. Most of the respondents who report they have had sex with a female have also had sex with a male (five out of seven).

Thirty-one per cent of 14- and 15-year-olds, 59% of 16- and 17-year-olds, and 71% of those 18 and over have already engaged in sexual activity (see Figure 18).

Almost two-thirds (62%) of the young women who reported having had sex had their first experience of sexual activity before the age of 16 (see Figure 19).

There is no difference in sexual activity for young women living in urban, town, or rural areas.

There is also no significant relationship between those who have had sex education classes and sexual activity, although there is a slight tendency for those who have had sex education classes to have reportedly not had sex (60% vs 52%, table not shown).

You need birth control, and need to talk it over first. A lot of people have sex just to have sex. They don't know what they're getting into.
Town focus group

Young women in the focus groups were asked if fear of AIDS would prevent them from having sex with a boyfriend. While there were many assertions that they would make a careful assessment of the young man's sexual history, there was no indication that they actually did this from their other discussion about boyfriends, nor any indication how such an assessment could reasonably be made.

It would all depend on the type of guy it was. If you knew that he had been around a lot, then I'd say "I want to see your doctor,"

Figure 17: Sex with Male

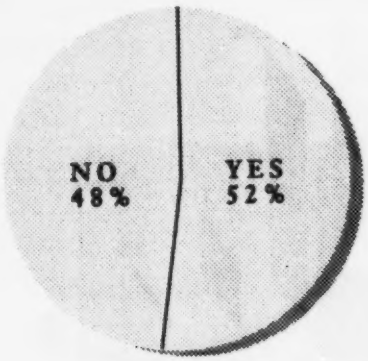
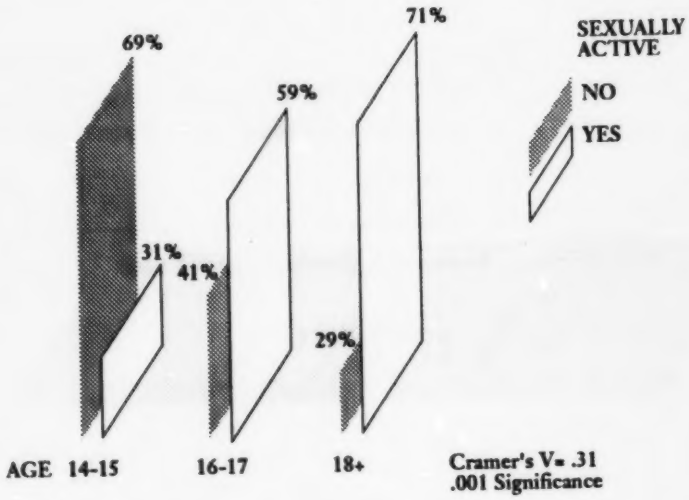
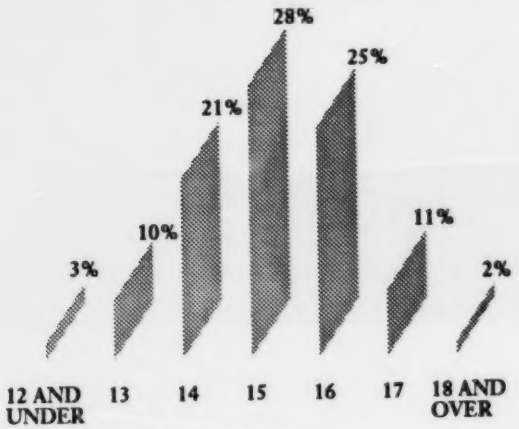


Figure 18: Student's Current Age by Sexual Activity



or something. But if you knew the person really well, and you knew that they took precautions, or even if they never had had sex before, and I would have no problem with that. But, say, if I was going with a guy who was around a lot, I'd take a lot of precautions, or just not have sex at all.
Rural focus group

Figure 19: **Age of First Sexual Activity**

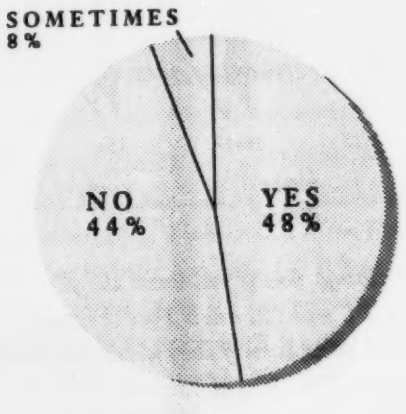


I feel if you really know someone, then you know who they've—you know.
Rural focus group

Eleven of the 15 young women (42%) who had sex by the age of 12 said they were not forced to have sex by their boyfriends (table not shown). Unfortunately, we did not ask if they had experienced sexual abuse by anyone other than a boyfriend. A number of young women did, however, give us an indication that they had indeed been sexually abused or assaulted as children.

I've learned that you can't even trust your family members about things like [sexual abuse]. Something happened to me—it was a long time ago, when I was little, but it still affects me today because I've learned not to trust anyone.
Rural focus group

Figure 20: **Birth Control Use**



BIRTH CONTROL USE

Almost half of the young women in the study report that they do use birth control (48%, see Figure 20).

Sixty-nine per cent of those who have had sex with a male report using birth control, compared to 9% who reportedly have not had sex and are using birth control (see Figure 21). This may seem high compared to the findings of other studies, and may be partially explained by our omission in not asking what kind of birth control they use. Some of them may consider withdrawal or douching after intercourse, for example, to be acceptable and reliable methods of birth control, where we do not.

Twenty per cent of those who report having been sexually active do not use birth control, compared to 90% who have not had sex. A further 11% use birth control only "sometimes," compared to 1% of those who have not had sex. In other words, almost one-third of the young women who are involved in sexual activity do so without consistent protection from accidental pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. This may be for a variety of reasons: a boyfriend's reluctance to take any responsibility for birth control, discomfort with a male doctor, or experiencing side effects of a particular contraceptive method. In general, birth control is expensive and relatively inaccessible to teenagers.

I don't like going to a male doctor. I went on the pill before, but I went off it because I didn't really like the idea of a male doctor being "down there."
Rural focus group

[My boyfriend] won't use a condom.
Rural focus group

I wouldn't go on the pill 'cause my sister went on the pill, and she gained, like, 20 pounds. I wouldn't want that!
Urban focus group

A number of young women remark on the difficulties of obtaining reliable and affordable birth control; some suggest their own solutions to the problem.

Schools should provide birth control for the students. There is too much teen pregnancy and also teen pregnancy is causing an abundance of poverty, and undereducated women because they have no time to complete their education, and can't provide a healthy environment for the baby.
Urban, grade 12

Interestingly, 10% of the young women who have *not* had sex are using some form of birth control, at least sometimes. Some young women may start taking the pill or may have an IUD inserted "just in case"; others may be prescribed birth control pills by their physicians for reasons others than the prevention of pregnancy—for the control of acne or for "menstrual irregularity," for example.

Young women who have had sex education classes are slightly more likely to be using birth control (48% vs 40%), although this is not statistically significant (table not shown). Also, the young women who have talked to their parents about sex are more likely to report using birth control than those who have not (51% vs 40%, see Figure 22).

Figure 21: Birth Control Use by Sex with Male

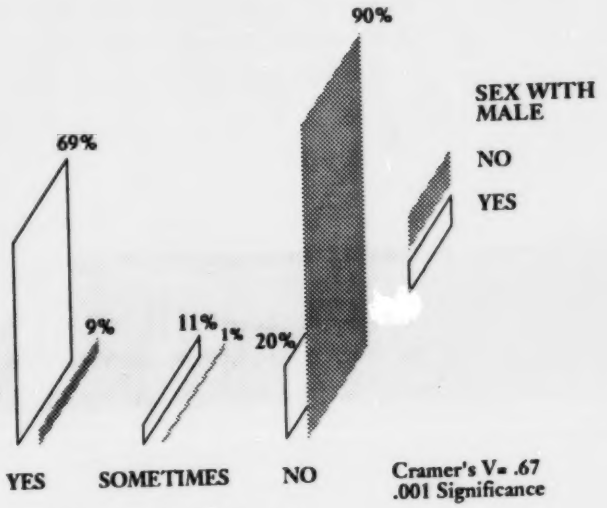
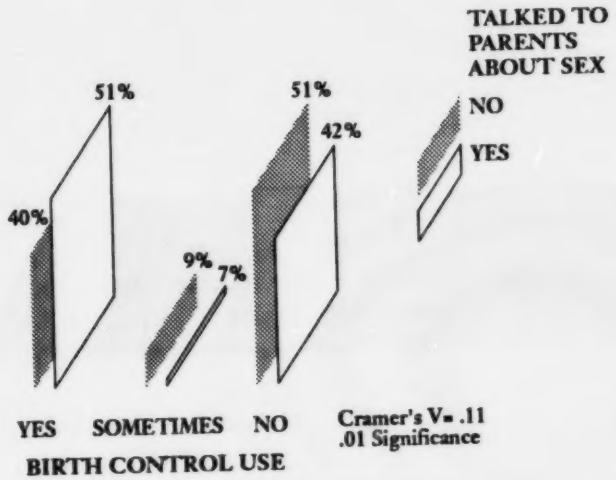


Figure 22: Talked to Parents about Sex by Birth Control Use

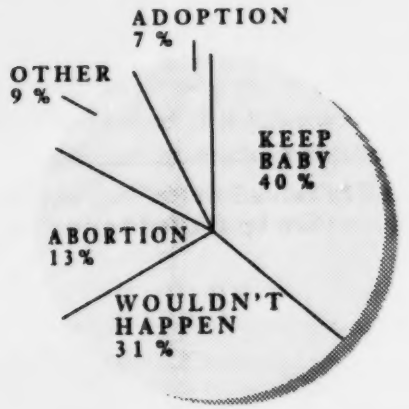


There was no significant difference in birth control use with regard to the young women's geographical location, although there was a slight tendency for young women from towns to report that they did not use birth control (53% town vs 44% rural and 43% urban, table not shown).

CRISIS PREGNANCY

Young women faced with a hypothetical accidental pregnancy most often stated that they would keep the baby (40%, see Figure 23).

Figure 23: **Crisis Pregnancy Plans**



Abortion was a more frequent option than relinquishing the baby for adoption (13% vs 7%). "Other" responses include "giving" the baby to the grandmother or other relative to care for, either temporarily or permanently, as well as placing the child in foster care (9%).

Urban young women (16%) are slightly more likely to choose abortion than their rural (11%) or town (10%) counterparts, while young women from towns and rural areas are more likely to say they would keep the baby (48% and 43% respectively), than those who live in urban areas (31%, see Figure 24). This may be related to the virtual unavailability of abortion services in any area of the province aside from the Halifax-Metro area.

Young women who have had sex are twice as likely to say they would keep the baby, compared to those who have not had sex (51% vs 25%, see Figure 25). However, young women who have not had sex are more likely to say "it wouldn't happen" (45%), as compared to 17% of those who have had sex.

However, those young women who have had sex but who are not using birth control —in other words, those most likely to actually experience an accidental pregnancy—have a very different sense of what they would do in this eventuality (see Figure 26).

More of these young women said they would keep the baby than those in the general survey population (50% vs 40%). What is most disturbing, however, is that 14% of them continue to say "it wouldn't happen."

Young women in the focus groups related anecdotes about themselves or their friends whose parent(s) were unable to be supportive when faced with a daughter's actual or suspected unplanned pregnancy.

A friend of mine, she just had an abortion. She's 14. Her parents said, "If you keep the baby, get out of the house." She knew she couldn't make it on her own. She has to go to school. So she had an abortion. She didn't want to.

I don't think it's just the kids that have to be taught; it's the parents too. Like that's a perfect example right there... They have to be taught, like you don't say that to your kid, like "Either you get an abortion, or get the hell out."

Urban focus group

Many fear they will lose their parents'—particularly their mothers'—financial and emotional support, respect, and even love, if they get pregnant.

I'd be scared to [tell my mother].

The thing that scares me the most is, you're gonna lose the respect. You think, "My mother's gonna think the worst of me."

She's never gonna love me the way she did before.

I don't know if [my parents] would [support me emotionally], but my mother said that she wouldn't help. They might take care of him and stuff, but she wouldn't pay.

Urban focus group

Young women are also reluctant to tell their mothers about their pregnancies, since they feel they would be pressured into doing what their mothers want, rather than receive support as they make their own decisions.

If I was pregnant, I would wait until she could see it for me to tell her, and then what could she do? Can't have an abortion [then]!

Town focus group

Others discover that their mothers can be supportive, and view the crisis as a vehicle to greater communication and understanding.

I found out that it doesn't affect my mother and I now. In fact, I think it kind of brought us a lot closer, because I find now I can talk to her about a lot more things, and be more open.

Urban focus group

Figure 24: Crisis Pregnancy Plans by Location

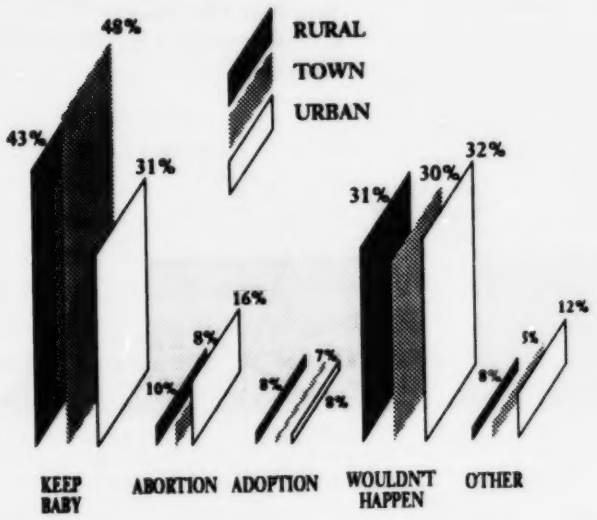


Figure 25: Sex with Male by Crisis Pregnancy Plans

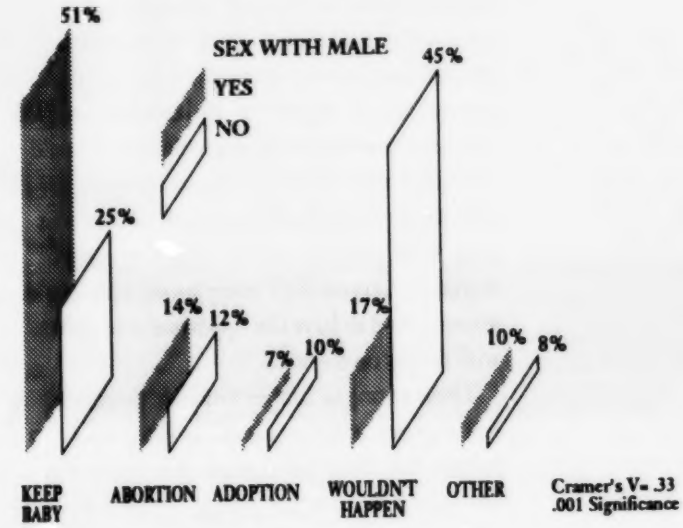
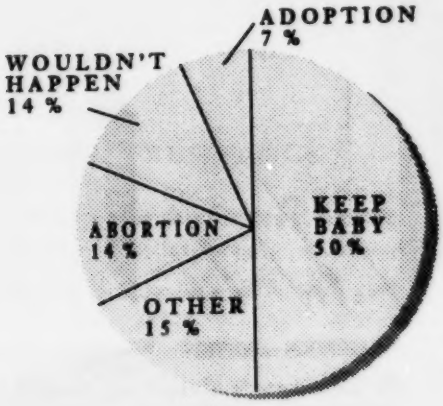


Figure 26: **Crisis Pregnancy Plans of Those Who Have Had Sex But Do Not Consistently Use Birth Control**



ABORTION

While there were no questions on the survey that requested the students' opinions about abortion, many chose to write their comments on this issue in other areas of the survey, particularly in response to the last question, "Do you have any comments or anything else you'd like to tell us?" The issue was also raised spontaneously by students in each of the focus groups, an indication of the need for young women to express their often strong opinions on abortion and to have the opportunity to debate with others on the issue.

These strong sentiments include those who feel abortion is wrong as well as those who believe that the decision regarding whether or not to have an abortion rests solely with the woman.

I am a Roman Catholic member of church and I think that abortion should be the right of the woman. People who choose to have sex should take the necessary precautions. These things [contraceptives] should be available to all women.
Town, grade 12

Anyone who has an abortion for no good reason (personal life - death) should be punished. I am totally against it—it turns my stomach.
Rural, grade 10

If anti-abortion picketers were raped, I wonder what their opinions might be.
Urban, grade 10

I am very against abortion. It's murder no matter how young the child is! The doctors who perform abortions and the mothers who have them should have the same sentencing in jail as someone who killed a baby that is already born.
Rural, grade 12

A man should not pass judgement on what a woman can do with her body.
Town, grade 12

Abortion is one area where many girls suggest that boyfriends have "rights": at a minimum, a right to input into the decision-making process, at most, the right to assert their own wishes over those of the young woman experiencing the pregnancy.

Boyfriend has the right to pressure you for a baby or an abortion but doesn't have the right to pressure you to do something you don't want to do.
Town, grade 10

I think a boyfriend has the right to be involved in the decision of what to do in an unwanted pregnancy.
Urban, grade 10

Pressure isn't the right word but I think the decision about what to do if you're pregnant does concern the guy.
Urban, grade 12

There is also a strong association between unwanted pregnancy and carelessness or irresponsibility.

Abortion is wrong to be used as a form of birth control ... should not be an option just because the woman changes her mind or gets accidently pregnant.
Town, grade 10

I think there should be more talk about the worries of having babies. Maybe then teenagers would be more responsible and would think twice.
Town, grade 12

The assumption that young women who get pregnant, or get "caught," have been irresponsible—either through agreeing to sexual activity or for failing to protect themselves adequately—does not allow for a recognition that not all sexual activity is chosen and no birth control method is perfectly reliable, accessible, and affordable. It reinforces the victimization of young women who become pregnant and choose to carry the baby to term.

There are also a few, brief personal abortion stories that offer us a hint of the intense emotion that underscores these young women's lives.

I have been pregnant, and had an illegal abortion but was pregnant with 2 and lost one. The other somehow survived and has been adopted.
Rural, grade 12

When I went to have an abortion, I was so relieved. I'm too young to have a baby. I was terrified.
Town, grade 12

FOOTNOTES

1 Cramer's V = .06 / .01 Significance
2 Cramer's V = .09 / .001 Significance
3 Cramer's V = .08 / .01 Significance
4 For example, 56% of grade 11 students in Nova Scotia reported having had sexual intercourse, according to the *Canada Youth and AIDS Study*, Nova Scotia Report, 1989.

RELATIONSHIPS

BOYFRIENDS

One of the questions on the survey was "Do you think a steady boyfriend has the right to ..." and was followed by six yes or no statements involving dress, friends, dating, ideal weight, sex, and unplanned pregnancy. There were also a few blank lines so the young women were able to volunteer additional information. Many students took the opportunity to expand on the list of things a boyfriend does not have the right to do.

Be with him all the time, don't talk to anyone else but him.
Town, grade 10

Tells you, you can't wear make up.
Urban, grade 12

No, like making you believe you're unwanted.
Rural, grade 12

What is obvious about these statements is that they come from the personal experiences of the respondents, an indication that the boyfriends of some of these young women have tried, successfully or unsuccessfully, to tell their partners what to do, as the following young woman points out:

They don't have the right, but in my experience they always do one of the above.
Urban, grade 12

While we might assume that these young women believe their boyfriends do not have the right to tell them what to do because they are autonomous young women who believe that *no one* has the right to tell them what to do, a few young women indicate that it is only the degree of the relationship that makes such directives unacceptable.

No [he doesn't have the right], because you are not married, and he is not your father.
Rural, grade 12

Whether or not they have had sex with a male does not, however, influence their perception of their boyfriends' role or rights (table not shown).

Many of the most adamant statements, once again seemingly arising from direct personal experiences, centre around drinking, taking drugs, or other illegal activity.

Steele [Steal], to lie to your parents why you come home late.
Town, grade 10

He shouldn't tell me what to drink, or try to get me to try drugs, etc.
Rural, grade 10

He has no right to force me to drink, do drugs or to do anything I don't want to.
Rural, grade 12

I don't think he should have the rights to tell me to take drugs or sell them.
Urban, grade 10

They have no right to tell you to do anything. The next time somebody forces me to do anything, I will literally kill him.
Town, grade 10

Some young women believe that boyfriends do have a right to tell them what to do in certain areas or regarding specific issues in their lives (see Table 6). Who to date and how to deal with an unplanned pregnancy are the items checked most often.

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Table 6: **Young Women's Attitude toward Boyfriends' "Rights"***

"Do you think a steady boyfriend has the right to ——"	
Tell you who you can go out with	4.5%
Pressure you to have a baby or an abortion	2.0
Tell you how much you should weigh	1.5
Tell you what to wear	1.0
Tell you who can be your friends	.5
Pressure you to have sex	.5
Other	20.5%

*Only yes answers to each yes/no question

While the majority of respondents believe that a steady boyfriend does not have the right to pressure them into anything they do not want to do, many of the respondents' answers illustrate that, for them, there is a clear boundary between suggestion and coercion.

Perhaps he could say, for example, what he might like you to wear, or tell you you're a little overweight, but he should never force anything on you.
Urban, grade 12

He may suggest what to wear, weight, etc...but not pressure you.
Rural, grade 12

A boyfriend does not control your life. He can offer suggestions but not commands.
Town, grade 11

The areas where a boyfriend is considered to have a right to make suggestions, however, are most often dress and weight, offering perhaps a subtle hint that a steady girlfriend is viewed as a possession or status symbol who must look good for her boyfriend as well as make him look good to his friends.

Some boys think they own a girl. They say, "I want you to wear your hair long." They tell her who she can and can't hang out with. A girlfriend of mine is in this kind of situation. That's emotional abuse.
Town focus group

[My friend] never used to curl her hair because [her boyfriend] used to like it plain. She never used to wear any eye shadow. She didn't wear jeans because he didn't like it.
Urban focus group

You have to make a choice between having friends, or just being with a boyfriend. I don't like that. He tells me all the time, "Don't eat this. You'll get fat. You're fat already. You gotta lose weight."
Rural focus group

"If it's for your own good" is another common theme offered by young women who answered in the affirmative concerning the right of boyfriends to tell them what to do. These respondents suggest that there are times when the boyfriend knows better than she does about affairs that concern her life.

Unless it is for your own good that he is making you do something and you can't understand why.
Urban, grade 12

No, unless it's in your best interest.
Urban, grade 10

Maybe if it is something for my own good.
Rural, grade 12

If the boyfriend is in the right.
Town, grade 10

No, unless it's within reason and no harm would come to you, or would be detrimental to your life.
Rural, grade 12

No, but I feel with my boyfriend he worries about me and does not want me out with just anyone.
Urban, grade 10

[Yes], Friends, because if you are easy led, the boy wouldn't want you to get hurt by your friends.
Urban, grade 12

Unfortunately, these responses give us no indication of the way "for your own good" can be determined, and no sense of whether it took persuasion or coercion to "convince" these young women to follow their boyfriends' directives rather than their own instincts or desires.

An extension of this theme can be seen in other responses that centre specifically around continuing with high school education.

He didn't want me to quit school and told me specifically not to quit school.
Rural, grade 10

Pressure you to get your education if you're thinking of quitting.
Rural, grade 12

Some young women identify boyfriend-girlfriend relationships as generally problematic, expressing the wish that their peers would stand up for themselves a little more.

As a [student from another country] I can see that the young female people in Canada get less information about these things and that their relationships with their boyfriends are very different. They rely so much more on them and do what they tell them.
Rural, grade 12

I really hate watching my friends take shit from their boyfriends, like—you're not going to do that because I said so; you can't talk to him, etc. My boyfriend used to say that and finally I told him he could stop or lose me—he stopped. I wish someone would teach more girls that they don't have to take anything like that.
Rural, grade 12

Many young women also responded to this question by providing us with many positive, caring, and egalitarian images of boyfriends.

A steady boyfriend should be someone you trust and you don't have to do anything you don't want to do.
Urban, grade 10

A steady boyfriend is a companion, he is not a guardian...
Urban, grade 12

I think a boyfriend is someone who loves you for who you are, and what you want to be.
Urban, grade 10

A real boyfriend who cares lets you make your own choices, and allows you to change, grow, and be yourself.
Rural, grade 12

A boyfriend who cares won't pressure his girlfriend.
Urban, grade 12

To be a steady boyfriend is not to be an owner and if he was my boyfriend he would respect me as much as I would respect his opinions That's basically why he would be my boyfriend.
Town, grade 10

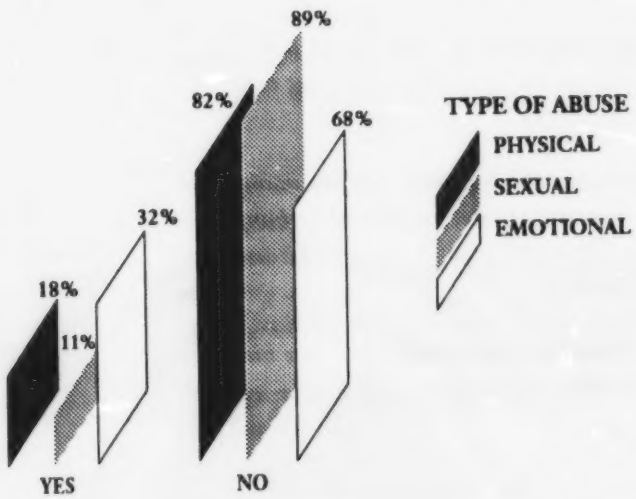
DATING ABUSE AND SEXUAL ABUSE

Men don't really go through as much as girls do. Girls should be able to live a life without violence and abuse and sexual harassment.

Rural, grade 12

Some of the young women in this study report having been slapped or hit (physically abused), forced to have sex (sexually abused), and called names (emotionally abused) by their boyfriends. The incidence of dating abuse ranges from 11% for sexual abuse, 18% for physical abuse, to fully 32% for emotional abuse (see Figure 27).

Figure 27: **Experience of Dating Abuse**



I didn't bring it on myself. I was raped, and that's how I got pregnant...I ended up moving in with [the rapist's roommate], and I think I actually didn't look for some of the signs at that time because I was desperate for someone to hold on to, and in return I think he wanted something for that, for helping me, and that's how the abuse started there. His father was also an abuser. But he put the blame on his father, instead of trying to stop that.

Rural focus group

The people I was with drank a lot, and they did drugs a lot. And I think that had something to do with it. They thought that they could just use me, and I was some sex object or something. Women didn't mean anything to them; they were just dirt.

Rural focus group

When I'm with my boyfriend, he might just kind of hit me, and I might, like, hit him back. He might hit me a little bit harder... Sometimes he'll leave like bruises on me. It's not nice, but he's the same height as me, but he's built, and he doesn't realize his own strength. He could hit me like three times as hard as what I could take, but he wouldn't really notice it. Once he pushed me, but he didn't think he pushed me hard enough, and I went flying back, and if I hadn't caught myself in the nick of time, I would of ended up on the ground.

Rural focus group

The first time he hit me, he knocked me unconscious. And from then on, I was quite frightened, and I learned to pick up on his moods. And he threatened to hurt me or my little boy if I didn't cooperate.

Rural focus group

I guess they just don't know their own strength, that's all it is.

Rural focus group

As with other anticipated "problem" areas in their relationships with present or future partners, (see the relevant discussion in the Housework and Childcare sections), young women believe that rational discussion has the power to change behaviour.

I'd ask them, "What's wrong?" And then figure out what's wrong, and, I mean, if a guy hit me, I'd say, "Why'd you do that?" And then I'd get him. He might have a problem. He might feel that he has to do that, so he can feel superior. You know, make him feel like he's a big man when he hits me. I'd just tell him "You don't have to hit me to feel like a big man. Just treat me, take me out." But, I mean, I'd talk to him.
Urban focus group

Nineteen per cent of the young women who have had sex with a male have been forced to have sex by their boyfriends. Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing whether this represents the first or a subsequent sexual encounter. In other words, did the boys force the girls to have sex initially, making it more difficult for her to say no subsequently, since she has already "done it"; or did she agree to participate in sexual activity initially, making it more difficult for her to say no subsequently, since she had already consented to sex?

The young women in the study who have experienced abuse, particularly those who have been sexually assaulted, indicate their need for assistance of some kind[1]—information, counselling, support groups—assistance they are clearly not getting.

What can you do if someone has forced you to have sex. Who can we turn to? I would really like to know the answer to this question.
Town, grade 10

I would like to know what to do if you're raped and stoned. I would like to talk to someone who's had it done to them. Women have discussion groups about how to deal with the pain and pressure it brings.
Rural, grade 12

More things go on than people realize. A lot of people get away with physical and sexual abuse. Something should be done. I was abused by a boyfriend in every way. I was too scared to do anything about it. Ashamed. We must find a way to report this without him finding out.
Rural, grade 10

I was raped at 14, by an 18 year old pig.
Town, grade 10

Date rape ... who believes you?
Town, grade 10

Despite the relatively high incidence of sexual abuse in dating relationships (11%, Figure 27) the vast majority of young women (96%) said that it was never okay for a man to force a woman to have sex with him (see Table 7). There is no relationship between the young women's attitudes toward forced sex and their experience of abuse at the hands of their boyfriends. Only 4% (70 students) said it was okay for a man to force a woman to have sex under the following circumstances:

Table 7: Attitude toward Forced Sex

96% said it was never okay (total # respondents - 1552)

4% said it was okay under the following circumstances:

If the man and woman have been going out for 6 months	3%
If he has spent a lot of money on her	8%
If the man and woman are married	23%
If the woman has been teasing him or leading him on	55%
Combination of the above	20%
Total # of respondents	70

Despite the assertion of one young woman that forced sex is okay simply "if they know each other" (Town, grade 10), one-quarter of these 70 students feel that forced sex is alright within marriage.

I don't think people should have sex until they are married and then they should force each other to have sex.
Rural, grade 12

Yes, if the man and woman are married, I don't know why wouldn't she.
Rural, grade 10

A boy has no right to do some of these things unless he's married to you.
Rural, grade 12

Over half of these students believe that forced sex is alright if the woman has been "teasing" the man or "leading him on," reinforcing the notion of women as temptress and blaming her for the man's "uncontrollable" sexual urges.

But I don't think it is fair of a woman seducing him.
Town, grade 10

If a woman is leading a guy on it is her own fault if she is forced to have sex.
Urban, grade 10

Yes if the woman has been teasing or leading him on...(slut).
Rural, grade 12

There is no significant difference in reported emotional, physical, or sexual abuse by boyfriends according to geographical location, and no difference in urban, town, and rural young women's attitudes towards forced sex (tables not shown).

I always thought that something like sexual abuse or dating abuse would happen to someone who was stupid, who didn't know what they were doing, who was out with someone who was indecent, or something, and I always thought I could pick guys that were great. "They're fine, there's nothing wrong with them." ... but I found out that you can never trust anybody. Well, you can ... but you gotta be careful first because it happened to me. I was forced to do something I didn't want to do. A couple of times, actually. So I guess I'm just saying that it can happen to anybody.
Rural focus group

However, young women who have experienced one of the forms of abuse are more likely to have experienced the others as well. Forty-three per cent of those who have been called names by their boyfriends have also been physically abused, as compared to 6% who have not been emotionally abused (see Table 8).

Table 8: The Relationship between Emotional and Physical Abuse

"Have you ever gone out with a boy who slapped or hit you?

"Have you ever gone out with a boy who called you names you didn't like?		yes	no
	yes	43%	57%
	no	6%	94%

Cramer's V = .44 / .001 Significance

Almost one-quarter (23%) of the young women who have been emotionally abused (called names they do not like) by their boyfriends have also been forced to have sex, as compared to 5% who reportedly have not been called names (see Table 9).

Table 9: The Relationship between Emotional and Sexual Abuse

"Have you ever gone out with a boy who forced you to have sex with him?"

		yes	no
"Have you ever gone out with a boy who called you names you didn't like?"	yes	23%	77%
	no	5%	95%

Cramer's V = .26 / .001 Significance

Almost one-third (32%) of young women who have been physically abused (slapped or hit) by their boyfriends have also been forced to have sex, compared to 7% who have not been physically abused (see Table 10).

Table 10: The Relationship between Physical and Sexual Abuse

"Have you ever gone out with a boy who forced you to have sex with him?"

		yes	no
"Have you ever gone out with a boy who slapped or hit you?"	yes	32%	68%
	no	7%	93%

Cramer"s V = .30 / .001 Significance

Unfortunately, as discussed earlier, sexual abuse questions on the survey pertained only to sexual abuse by boyfriends. Young women who have been victims of incest, rape, or sexual assault at the hands of male relatives, family friends, or strangers remain uncounted in this population. A few young women did volunteer information about other sexual assaults they have experienced.

I was forced almost to have sex with a 33 year old man and I got him off me but it was very scary. I was 14.

Rural, grade 10

I was wondering if you had any information on victims of sexual abuse from an older person (say a grandfather).

Rural, grade 12

MARRIAGE

Ninety-three per cent of the young women in the sample expected to marry, the majority while in their twenties (see Table 11). According to Statistics Canada data, the average age of women in this country at the time of their first marriage is 24.5 years.[2]

Table 11: Age Range at Which Marriage Expected

Age	%
15-19	2
20-24	39
25-29	47
30-34	5
35-39	1
other	6

There is no significant difference in the age range at which marriage is expected by geographical location, although there is a slight tendency for urban young women to say they will marry later (7% vs 5% for town and 4% for rural), and for rural young women to say they will marry earlier (88% vs 87% for town and 83% for urban, table not shown), but this is not statistically significant.

There is, however, a weak relationship between age range at which marriage is expected and family status. Young women who live in "other" kinds of families (with grandparents, foster parents, or boyfriend's parents, for example) are more likely (8%) than those who live in one-parent (3%), two-parent (2%), or blended families (1%) to say they will get married before they are 20 (see Table 12).

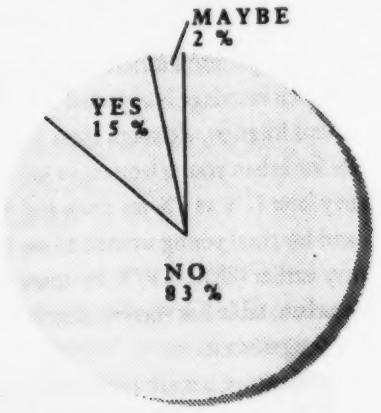
Table 12: Age Range at Which Marriage Expected by Family Status

Family Status	Expected Age Range of Marriage: Teens	Twenties	Thirties	Other
Both Parents	2%	86%	5%	7%
Single Parent	3%	87%	4%	6%
Blended Family	1%	88%	7%	4%
Other	8%	83%	7%	2%

Cramer's V = .07 / .01 Significance

Fifteen per cent of the young women surveyed say they expect to get a divorce at some point in their lives (see Figure 28).

Figure 28: Expectation of Divorce



Young women who expect to marry in their teens or twenties are more likely to think that they will not get divorced (83% and 84% respectively), while young women who expect to marry in their thirties are more likely to think that they *will* get divorced (36%, see Table 13).

Table 13: Age Range at Which Marriage Expected by Expectation of Divorce

Age Range of Expected Marriage	Expectation of Divorce: Yes	Maybe	No
Teens	14%	3%	83%
Twenties	14%	2%	84%
Thirties	36%	1%	63%
Other	16%	8%	76%

This desire to marry later may reflect a more cautious approach to marriage. Those young women who say they will not marry at all are often sceptical about marriage as an institution.

Personally, I don't plan on getting married. Many people are now choosing to live together, and after six months are considered to be married, but aren't officially. Why bother signing some papers? If you love somebody, it doesn't matter. I think I'd live with someone but I wouldn't be able to marry him. Marriage only pressures people (perhaps the cause of divorce).
Rural, grade 12

I wouldn't get married. It's because I've seen too many break up. I might live with somebody. Marriage just doesn't seem very important to me. It's just a piece of paper.
Rural focus group

Considering that currently almost one in three marriages ends in divorce,[3] young women's expectation of divorce is much lower than the probability that they may face a divorce at some point in their lives. Their "it won't happen to me" attitude makes them ill-prepared for this eventuality.

I see the people that are having problems, and I say to myself that I'm not going to let that happen, and so I'm pretty much in tune to what I'm looking for. I pretty much have it in my mind that I'm going to have a perfect life.

Rural focus group

In response to the question "If you ever got divorced, how would you support yourself?," a large majority of young women said they would get a job (85%, see Figure 29).

Or, more accurately, in light of the respondents' plans to work through their childbearing years or to take only a few years out of the paid workforce, many young women say they will keep the job they have at the time and continue to support themselves.

I'd keep the job I have and go on with life the usual way.

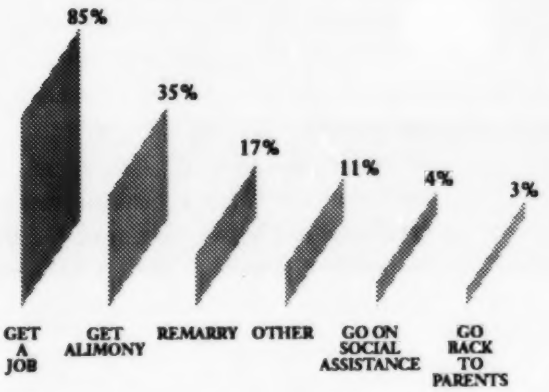
Rural, grade 12

I will make sure before I am married that I have adequate training and experience to support myself. I will continue to work after marriage.

Rural, grade 12

Almost half of the husband-wife families in Nova Scotia currently have both spouses working.[4] It is becoming increasingly difficult to support a family on the income of a sole wage-earner. There seems to be little recognition of the added financial burden that children, if there are any, bring to single women in the job market, particularly to those in the more traditional, dead-end, low-paying occupations. Female lone parents in Nova Scotia have an average family income 60% that of male lone parent families, and only 48% that of husband-wife families.[5] Not all women are awarded support payments from ex-husbands, and a large number of men default on the payments on a regular basis.[6]

Figure 29: Financial Support after Divorce*



***Only yes responses to each yes/no question**

Only 17 per cent of the young women say they will remarry (see Figure 29). This compares to 64% of Canadian women who currently remarry after divorce.[7] Some clearly believe that remarriage is the simplest option; others have unrealistic notions of being "taken care of."

Find someone else.

Urban, grade 10

Marry a millionaire that's on his deathbed.

Urban, grade 12

The complexity of money issues and the realities of banking practice (such as the problems women encounter in getting credit ratings and loans) are also areas of which respondents demonstrate a lack of complete understanding.

Have some money in the bank, just in case I do get divorced. My husband would not know about it.

Town, grade 10

Apply for a loan.

Rural, grade 10

There is no significant difference in rural, town, and urban young women's expectation of divorce, or in how they say they will support themselves if they do get divorced, except that urban young women are slightly less likely to think that they will go on social assistance (table not shown).[8]

As may be expected, young women from blended families are more likely to think that they will get divorced (31%), while young women from nuclear families are more likely to say they will never get divorced (86%, see Table 14).

Table 14: **Expectation of Divorce by Family Status**

Family Status	Expectation of Divorce: Yes	Maybe	No
Both Parents	13%	2%	86%
Single Parent	19%	5%	76%
Blended Family	31%	4%	65%
Other	20%	2%	78%

Cramer's V = .11 / .001 Significance

Young women who want to do half of the housework, or more, generally think they will get their expectations met, while there are significant differences in the amount of housework young women who want to do less than half actually expect to do. Young women who want to do all or most of the housework expect to do all or most of the housework (85%), while those who want to do half expect to do half (59%). Of those who want to do only some or none, however, most expect to do more (see Table 15).

Table 15: **Housework Wanted by Housework Expected**

Amout of Housework Wanted	Amount of Housework Expected: All or Most	About Half	Some or None
All or Most	85%	14%	1%
About Half	42%	57%	1%
Some or None	23%	53%	24%

Pearson's R = .41 / .001 Significance

HOUSEWORK

Only half of husbands do any housework at all; on average men do one hour of housework each day, while women do two and a half hours, regardless of whether or not they work outside the home.[9] In light of these figures, young women's expectations of shared housework are unfortunately extremely unrealistic.

Sixty-six per cent of young women in this study want to do half the housework; 51 per cent of them expect to do half (see Figure 30).

Seventy-two per cent of young women want their spouse to do half of the housework; only 42 per cent of them expect that he will do half (see Figure 31). A majority (56%) expect their husbands to do only some or no housework at all.

Generally, the greater the amount of housework respondents want their spouses to do, the more they expect them to do. A majority of the young women who want their spouses to do most of the housework actually expect them to do only half (57%); a large majority (83%) of the young women who want their spouses to do some or none of the housework expect them to do only some or none at all (see Table 16).

Table 16: Spouse Housework Wanted by Spouse Housework Expected

Want Spouse to do	Expect Spouse to Do: All or Most	About Half	Some or None
All or Most	8%	57%	35%
About Half	1%	46%	53%
Some or None	1%	16%	83%

Pearson's R = .28 / .001 Significance

Rural young women are slightly more likely to want to do all or most of the housework (15%), compared to young women from towns (12%) and urban areas (10%), and least likely to want to do a little or none (18%) than their urban (23%) and town (26%) peers (see Table 17).

Table 17: Housework by Location

		Amount of Housework Wanted: All or Most	About Half	Some or None
Location	Rural	15%	67%	18%
	Town	12%	62%	26%
	Urban	10%	67%	23%

Cramer's V = .07 / .01 Significance

Rural young women are also more likely to expect their spouses to do less than half of the housework (62%) versus those from towns (56%) and urban areas (49%, see Table 18).

I want my house clean, and if he's not gonna do it properly, then I don't want him doing it.

Rural focus group

Figure 30: Housework

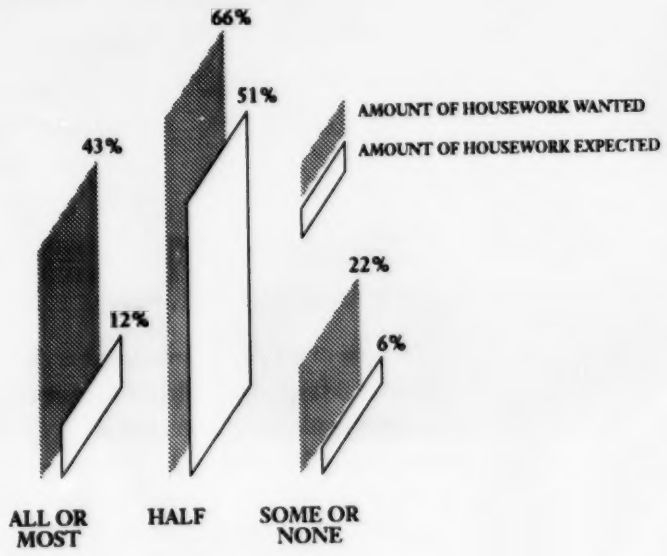
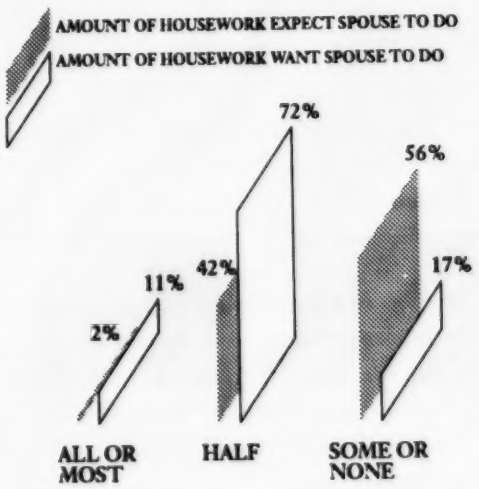


Figure 31: Spouse Housework



Urban young women are the most likely to expect their spouses to do about half of the housework (50%), as compared to 40% from towns and 37% from rural areas (see Table 18).

Table 18: Expected Spouse Housework by Location

Location	Expect Spouse to do: All or Most	About Half	Some or None
Rural	1%	37%	62%
Town	4%	40%	56%
Urban	1%	50%	49%

Very few of the young women expect their spouse to do more than half of the housework, yet significantly more expect that they themselves will do more than half. Even taking this into account, young women have high expectations for their spouses' contribution to the housework—expectations that are not born out by current trends in housework patterns among married couples.[10] Hopefully, their expectations will serve to increase the demands they place on their spouses for more equitable sharing of housework. At present they have few role models for truly shared housework.

My father doesn't do anything around the house ... [My mother tries to get him to help] but he'll go downstairs and hide.
Rural focus group

I grew up in a household where all work was divided between my 2 parents so I know it is possible. However, I also know from observing my friends households that it's rare, and I was lucky to be exposed to it.
Urban, grade 10

When confronted with the discrepancy between their expectations and the current reality of men's limited participation in housework, young women in the focus groups expressed a confidence in the power of rational discussion, and if that failed, withdrawal of services or withdrawal from the relationship would follow.

If he expected me to do everything, I'd try to talk to him about it and try to get him to understand that if we want to have, like a lot of things, like in life or whatever... well, I would take care of the children, but if he expected me to do all of the housework too, he's got another thing coming because I'd just let it go, and let him find out what it's like to have no clean clothes to wear, or whatever, until he learns that he's got to do some of it too.
Rural focus group

The first thing I would say is that I would not have a husband that would do that! Well, I know he could change on me in a couple of years, and I would talk to him, and try to reason it out, and if not, I don't think I would stay with him. I wouldn't put up with that. There's no way —it'd be too much for me.
Urban focus group

CHILDREN

Almost half (47%) of the young women who took part in this study want to have two children; more want to have three children (21%) than wanted to have none (9%) or one (11%, see Figure 32). This represents larger families than are presently the norm. Today, the average number of children in each family in Nova Scotia is 1.6.[11] This means that most women today are having only one or two children.

Urban young women are more likely than their rural and town peers to say they want only one child (14% vs 9% and 7% respectively) and slightly less likely to say they want three or more children (17% vs 23% for each of the other categories), while young women from rural areas

are slightly more likely to say they want four or more children (14% vs 12% for town and 10% for urban, see Figure 33).

As would be anticipated, there is a strong relationship between young women's expectation of marriage and number of children wanted (see Table 19). A majority of those who do not expect to marry said they do not want any children (54% compared to only 6% of those who do expect to marry), and when they do want children, they consistently wanted fewer of them than their peers who do expect to marry.

Table 19: Number of Children Wanted by Expectation of Marriage

		Number of Children Wanted				
		None	One	Two	Three	Four+
Do you expect to marry?	yes	6%	10%	49%	22%	13%
	no	54%	20%	18%	5%	3%

Cramer's V = .43 / .001 Significance

There is also a correlation between the number of children wanted and young women's expected age at the time of marriage (see Table 20). Young women who expect to marry at a younger age are more likely to say they want three or more children; the older the expected age at marriage, the more likely are young women to want only one or two children.

Those young women who say they want to have two or three children are more likely to feel that children would be an obstacle to their career than those who only want one or two; however, those who say they want four or more children do not follow this tendency (table not shown). It appears as if young women who want four or more children may have less of a sense of reality than their peers who want smaller families. On the other hand, those who want large families may see homemaking as their intended career.

Figure 32: Number of Children Wanted

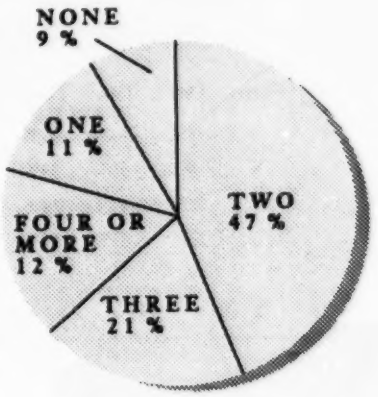


Figure 33: Number of Children Wanted by Location

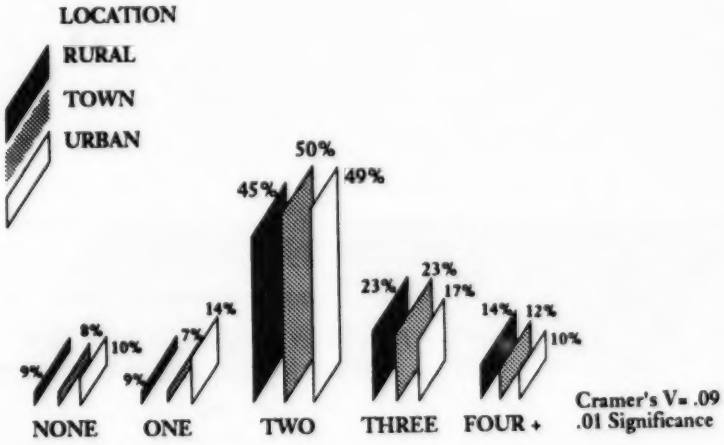


Table 20: Number of Children Wanted by Expected Age of Marriage

	Number of Children Wanted				
	None	One	Two	Three	Four +
Teens	—	17%	43%	27%	13%
Twenties	5%	9%	50%	23%	13%
Thirties	16%	21%	41%	14%	8%
Other	10%	12%	55%	10%	13%

Pearson's R = .10 / .001 Significance

CHILDCARE

Almost equal numbers of young women say that they will not interrupt their careers at all for childrearing (46%) as those who said that they will stay home with their children until they start school (44%, see Figure 34).

Personally, I think I'd have to go back to work because the kids would drive me up the wall. I mean, I love children and all, but like, even when I babysit, like, all the time, and the kids get on my nerves toward the end of it—towards Friday. I guess if you go to work you get your own space.
Rural focus group

When I have kids, I want to go right back to work, like after they're about a year old because...I don't know...I just feel a job's important, and I'd need the income for the family.
Rural focus group

Altogether, 90% of the young women say that, at a minimum, they will return to work sometime during their child's preschool or early school years (although this period could be greatly extended depending on the number and spacing of children).

A small minority said they would only return to work after their children were grown (3%).

I wouldn't want my child to be a latchkey child.
Urban focus group

If the kids are going into high school, or they're 16 or 17, that's okay. Why shouldn't you go out and have a part-time job. You sit at home all day, and you've been doing it for seventeen years. And the kids are off to school. What are you gonna do? Sit around and do more laundry?
Urban focus group

Young women planning to attend university are more likely to say they will not stop work for childrearing than the young women with any other post-secondary plans (table not shown).[12]

Over half of the young women who took part in this study optimistically stated that they would share childcare with their partner (see Table 21).

Table 21: Childcare Plans*

Share childcare with partner	54%
Hire babysitters/nannies	25%
Stay home and care for them myself	19%
They would go to daycare centres	16%
Grandmother would babysit	9%
Other relatives would babysit	6%
Partner would stay home with them	1%
Other means	6%

* Only yes answers to each yes/no question

Since this childcare option was preceded by "Partner would stay home with them" and "Stay home with them myself," we can assume that these young women intended their answer to

mean truly "shared" childcare, which involves each partner having a part-time job or a flexible shift job that would allow for this possibility. There are virtually no two-parent families who currently have been able to achieve these young women's ideal. What "shared childcare" now means, in a majority of cases, is that the mother has the primary responsibility for childcare and the father will perhaps take over some of the childcare responsibilities when he is at home.

Hopefully, these young women will work to bring this ideal closer to a reality for their generation, although in the focus groups they had no concrete method of ensuring that their partner would share family responsibilities. As with housework, young women tended to assume they would simply "know him" well enough to know whether or not he would participate fully in caring for the children.

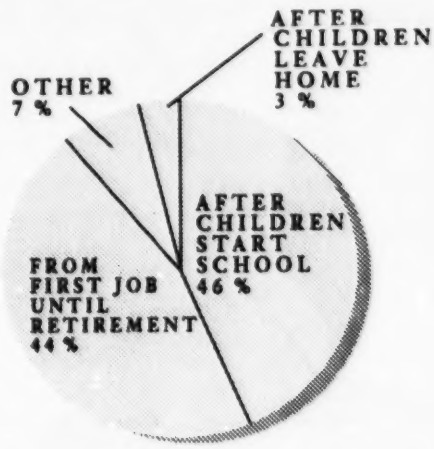
I'd make sure I had a man who wasn't like that.
Urban focus group

If you're in love with someone, you're gonna know whether they're gonna look after the kids or not. I mean, you're gonna know quite a bit about them.
Urban focus group

You're probably not going to marry them right away. You're gonna get to know each other, and know how you react, and if you're walking with your boyfriend, and he sees a child, "Oh, I need children," then you know. If he says "I love children" then it kind of gives you a hint of what he's like.
Urban focus group

The young women who wish to share childcare with their partners are also assuming that they will have a partner to share childcare with. At present, there are over 25,000 lone parent

Figure 34: Plans Concerning Timing of Employment



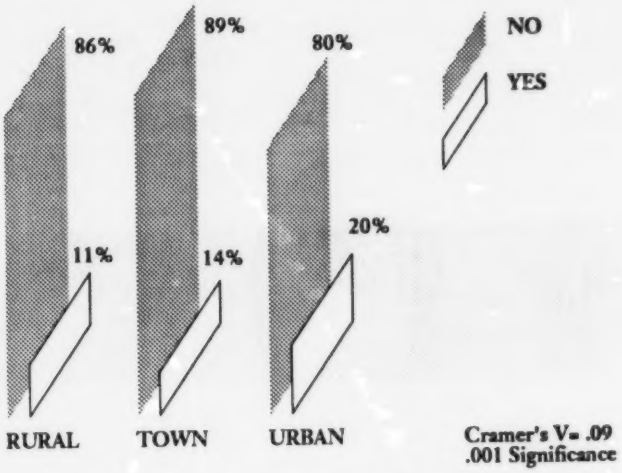
mothers in Nova Scotia, up from roughly 21,000 in 1981[13]; there is no reason to expect that this figure will not continue to rise. Clearly, in such cases, there is no option of sharing childcare.

Young women who expect to have fewer children are more likely to say they will hire babysitters or will use daycare. There is a slight tendency, although it is not statistically significant, for those who expect to have more children to say they will stay home to take care of them (table not shown). After two children, the cost of daycare for each additional child becomes increasingly prohibitive for average working families.

There is no significant difference between young women living in either rural, town, or urban areas with regard to future childcare plans, except for the use of daycare centres (see Figure 35). Young women from urban areas (20%) are more likely to think that they will put their children in daycare centres while they work than those in rural areas (14%) or towns (11%).

This may be related to the greater availability of daycare in urban areas, or to a notion perhaps more prevalent in the rural areas about the "better" place to care for children.

Figure 35: **Plans to Use Daycare Centres By Location**



I think that women who can afford it should stay at home with their children.
Rural, grade 10

There is a slightly greater tendency for those who want to have two or more children to expect to look after the children themselves than those who only want one child.[14] Those who want two or more children expect to share childcare responsibilities with their spouse more than those who wants only one child.[15] Those young women who want only one child expect to hire babysitters,[16] use daycare centres,[17] or grandmothers[18] more than those wanting to have more than one child (tables not shown). Many young women seemed to have assumptions about mothers, grandmothers, and other relatives taking care of their children.

[I would stay home] until they are about a year old then I'd want my relatives or grandmother to take them while myself and husband were at work.
Rural, grade 12

My sister, she has a little boy, and she's working right now, so my mother babysits them, but after a while, like my mother's done it for both my sisters, and she's getting tired of it, so when it comes to my turn to have a kid, she doesn't want to have anything to do ... to watch it or anything. She wants me, when I have a kid, to do it when I'm out of school and on my own. I can understand her point, like she raised us, and she doesn't want to raise our kids, but that's what she's doing.
Rural focus group

(Interviewer: Who is going to look after your children?) My mother. (Have you asked her about that?) I told her about it! (Well, how do you think she feels about that?) [Assumes "voice" of mother] I've raised my own, I'm not raising yours! (That's what she said?) I think she was just joking.
Rural focus group

We also see this attitude in dealing with accidental pregnancy:

Ask mother to keep it until I got older.
Urban, grade 10

Get my mother to care for the baby—kind of adoption, I guess. So I can keep in touch.
Rural, grade 12

FOOTNOTES

1 There is a weak relationship between experience of abuse and wanting information about sexual abuse, with those who had been abused slightly more likely to want information (Cramer's V = .2 / .01 Significance, table not shown).

2 Statistics Canada, *Marriages and Divorces, Vital Statistics*, Vol. II, Catalogue 84-205.

3 Statistics Canada, *Marriage, Divorce and Mortality*, Catalogue 84-536. In Nova Scotia in 1986 there were 6,445 marriages and 2,550 divorces. Statistics Canada, *Marriages and Divorces*, 1986, Catalogue 84-2005.

4 Statistics Canada Census Data 1986, *The Nation: Families, Part II*, Catalogue 93-107.

5 Statistics Canada Census Data 1986, *The Nation: Family Income: Census Families*, Catalogue 93-117.

6 There were 4,947 default orders (including persistent default summonses) sent out against 9,152 active support orders in the fiscal year 1989-90. Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.

7 Statistics Canada, *Canadian Social Trends*, No. 13, Summer 1989.

8 Urban 2% "yes", compared to rural 4% and town 5% "yes" answers. Cramer's V = .08 / .01 Significance.

9 Statistics Canada, *General Social Survey*, 1986.

10 Statistics Canada, *General Social Survey*, 1986.

11 Statistics Canada, *Vital Statistics, Vol. I, Births*, Catalogue 84-204.

12 Cramer's V = .08 / .01 Significance.

13 Statistics Canada Census Data 1986, *Families, Part I*, Catalogue 93-106.

14 Pearson's R = .06 / .05 level of Significance.

15 Pearson's R = .05 / .05 level of Significance.

16 Pearson's R = .06 / .01 level of Significance.

17 Pearson's R = .07/ .01 level of Significance.

18 Pearson's R = .07 / .01 level of Significance.

DIET

Half (49%) of the young women surveyed feel they are too fat (see Figure 36), although the majority of them fall into "normal" weight and height ranges (100-139 lbs. and 5'1"-5'6"). Very few feel they are too thin (4%).

Forty-four per cent of the respondents have been on a diet at some time during the past year (table not shown). A majority of the young women who feel they are too fat have been on a diet (65%), but even some of those who feel good about their weight or too thin have been on a diet (24% and 9% respectively, see Figure 37).

Of those who have been on a diet, only a small minority have tried to lose weight in a healthful and sensible manner, by reducing "junk food" (15%) or by increasing the amount of exercise they got (less than 1%, see Figure 38).

Many of those who say they have reduced their food intake in order to lose weight say they will skip one or two meals a day, or not eat for a day or a week at a time, rather than simply cut down at each regular meal and not eat between meals.

No breakfast or lunch, just supper.
Town, grade 10

I don't eat very much anymore.
Town, grade 10

Have nothing but water for two weeks.
Town, grade 10

I'd eat one week and not the next.
Town, grade 10

After I had a baby, only two meals a day.
Town, grade 10

Figure 36: Feelings about Weight

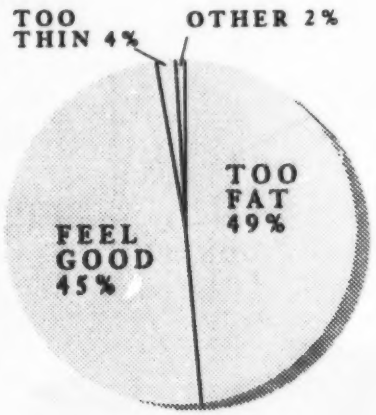
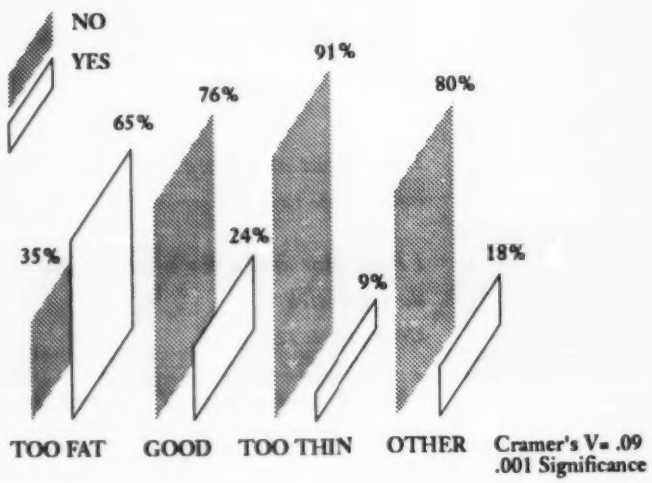


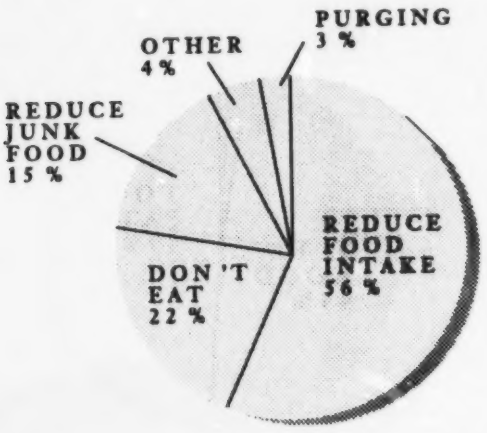
Figure 37: Dieting by Feelings about Weight



Some students indicated that they substituted other substances (cigarettes, caffeine, water, one kind of food) for a healthful, balanced diet.

Smoke cigarettes and drink tea/coffee.
Urban, grade 10

Figure 38: **Type of Diet**



Water and bran muffins.
Urban, grade 12

Some young women clearly have serious problems that may indicate anorexia and/or bulimia.

I don't eat anything.
Rural, grade 12

I have not eaten for a while, but when I do I get sick ...
Urban, grade 12

Not eat, starve myself, get sick after meals.
Urban, grade 12

Young women wrote more about themselves and their diets than they did about anything else. Although they appear to be quite sophisticated in their knowledge of healthy food and the importance of exercise, their general lack of understanding with regard to the dangers of starvation was appalling. Only a few recognize the unhealthiness of their diet.

It was called the 3 day diet. You were supposed to lose 10 lbs. in 3 days. I started to feel sick and weak so I stopped.
Urban, grade 12

I exercised and went on a grapefruit diet, I also realized that I was doing no good for my body by starving it so I stopped and followed the Food Guide of Canada.
Urban, grade 10

Crash diets, anorexic. (Then I smartened up) exercise, eat right.
Urban, grade 10

I took laxatives for a while but I have stopped now and have very healthy eating habits as a result of realizing how stupid they were. I weigh less now than I did when I took laxatives.
Urban, grade 10

There is no indication that any of these young women have come to accept their body shape and size even though they may recognize the unhealthiness of a particular diet. Their response is not to accept themselves as they are but to lose weight in a more healthful fashion—by exercising and cutting out junk foods, for example.

SUBSTANCE USE

Seventy per cent of the young women surveyed do not smoke, and most of those who do smoke, smoke less than 10 cigarettes a day (19%, see Figure 39). This finding is comparable to other recent studies of adolescent smoking.[1]

While it is not statistically significant, there is a slight tendency for the urban young women who do smoke to report smoking a greater number of cigarettes daily than their town or rural peers. Young women from rural areas are slightly more likely not to smoke at all (tables not shown).

Alcohol is still by far the substance most used by the young women in this study (see Figure 40). Two-thirds of these young women use alcohol regularly; almost half (47%) of them drink once a month.[2]

Most of those who do drink alcohol consume three or more drinks at one time (37%, see Figure 41).[3] Clearly, many of these young women drink in order to get drunk.

There was a weak but significant correlation between the frequency of and the amount of young women's alcohol use; in general, those who drink more, do it more often. Those who use alcohol several times a week are more likely to say they do not know how many drinks they have at one time (table not shown).[4]

Comparisons based on geographic location illustrate that rural young women are slightly less likely to use alcohol at all, and when they do drink, they tend to drink less often than their town or urban peers (see Figure 42). Young women from towns are the most likely to use alcohol and to drink more frequently than young women from other areas.

Marijuana and solvents are the next most frequently reported substances used, with 10% of young women using marijuana and 5% using solvents. The majority of those who do use these substances do so an average of once a month (refer to Figure 40).

There is a moderate relationship between amount of alcohol used and amount of marijuana used. Those young women who do not use alcohol also do not use marijuana (99%), while those who use alcohol two to three times a week or more are the most likely to use marijuana once a month, once a week, several times a week, or every day.[5] Those who are the most frequent users of alcohol are also the most likely to use coke and crack (tables not shown).[6]

Figure 39: Number of Cigarettes Smoked per Day

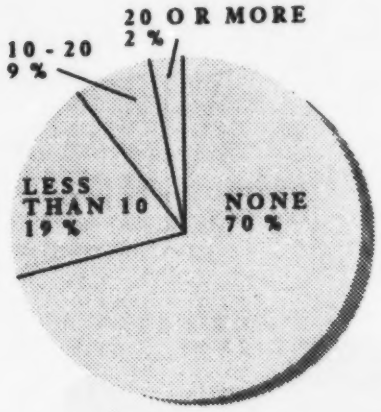
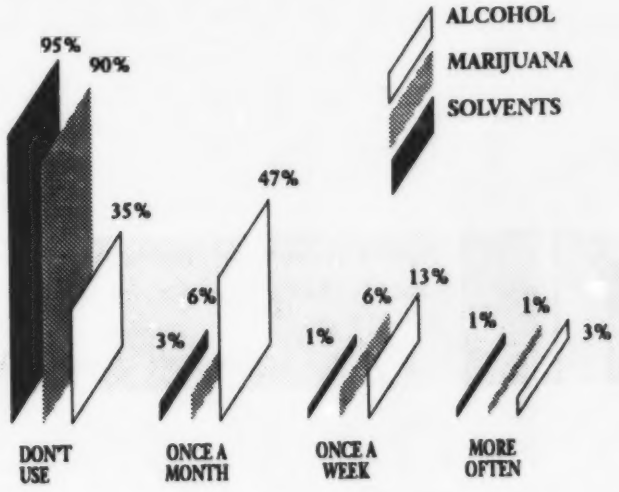


Figure 40: Frequency of Substance Use



*Tranquilizer, coke, and crack use is less than 3%

FOOTNOTES

1 For example, Anna Freeman et al., in *Students and Tobacco: The 1990 Nova Scotia Council on Smoking and Health Survey*, found that 23% of 15-19 year olds were regular tobacco users.

2 Queen's University's *Canada Youth and AIDS Study: Nova Scotia Report*, 1989 found that 48% of grade 11 students in the province drank about once a month.

3 This is significantly lower than the findings of the *Canada Youth and AIDS Study: Nova Scotia*

Figure 41: **Amount of Alcohol Consumed at One Time**

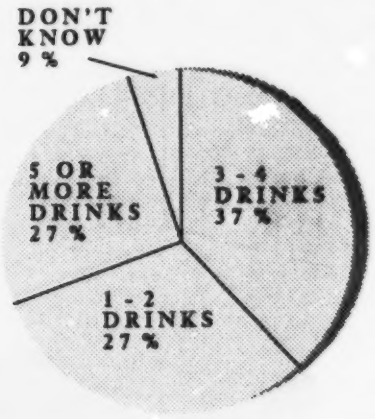
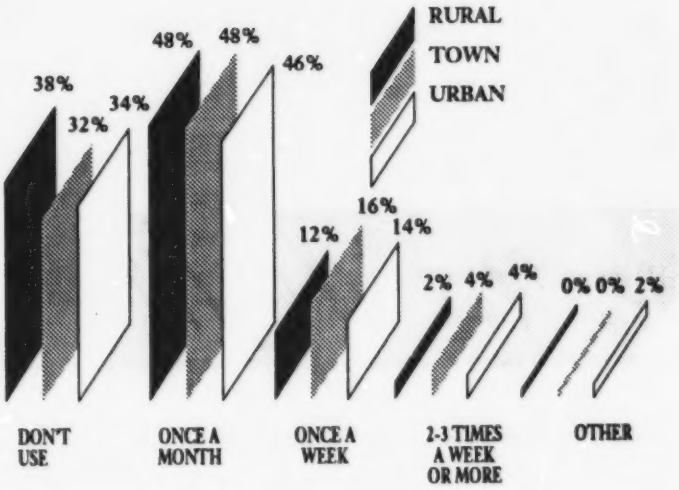


Figure 42: **Frequency of Alcohol Consumption by Location**



Report, 1989. Half of grade 9 students and 72% of grade 11 students reported they drank three or more drinks of alcohol at one time. This may be accounted for in gender differences in alcohol consumption, since this study included both boys and girls.

4 Pearson's R = .26 / .001 Significance.

5 Pearson's R = .37 / .001 Significance.

6 Pearson's R = .12 / .001 Significance.

FEMINISM

One of the questions we asked young women was "How would you define a feminist?"[1] Students' responses covered the widest possible range of ideas, with many strong feelings in both negative and positive approaches (see Table 22). Almost half (49%) of the young women provided us with a primarily positive definition, involving one or more of the concepts of women's rights, equality-seeking, and independence.

A feminist is someone who is proud of her sex and would like to see a world in which everyone is just as proud, regardless of sex, race, etc.
Urban, grade 10

A feminist is an intelligent woman of the 90's who believes she can do or accomplish anything a man can do. A strong willed woman who knows men and women are equal.
Rural, grade 10

Twenty-nine per cent provided us with primarily negative definitions, and 22% said they did not know or gave no answer.

Some young women provided us with a positive definition but followed it with an assertion that men and women *are* fundamentally different.

A woman who wants that men and women are treated equally but often try to get more power over males. They ignore the fact that there is a natural difference between men and women.
Rural, grade 12

Table 22: Definitions of Feminism

Women's Rights	20%
Equality Seeking	22%
Liberated, Independent	7%
Total Positive	**49%**
Outspoken, Opinionated	2%
Discriminates against Men	5%
Radical	3%
Traditional, Feminine	10%
Other	9%
Total Negative	**29%**
Don't Know	8%
No Answer	14%
Total Don't Know or No Answer	**22%**

I don't think a woman's place is in the kitchen, but I do believe that a woman has a duty to provide a certain element of love and guidance that men, because of their nature, do not have.
Rural, grade 12

Someone who thinks that men and women are equal at everything. They have to face it that that's not true.
Urban, grade 10

I think something has gone out of life. Men and women try to be equal and they aren't; they never will be. The sexes are different. Jobs and salaries should be equal but otherwise we are not the same. Men will always be raised by women who may be feminist but who will still give their sons sexist influences. With everyone trying to be equal to the opposite sex there is no romance or gallantry anymore.
Rural, grade 10

Some young women felt that feminists were demanding "extra" rights or pushing the pursuit of equality too far.

I believe women are equal to men and deserve equal rights but I don't think they are deservant of extra rights.
Urban, grade 12

A feminist is a woman who is out to destroy the male race. They started out okay trying to get equal rights but there is a limit. They are still pushing too hard, this world is dominated by men, it should be more balanced, yes, but not the extreme they are pushing it. They want everything and they soon will start taking everything.
Town, grade 10

Some equated feminism with female chauvinism ...

A feminist is a female or woman that think she is better than a male and keep calling the male race down.
Town, grade 10

One who (when someone is talking about Mankind and says Man...) says "what about woman?" etc. Someone who takes a spaz when someone said something that may or may not be meant as an insult to women. Feminists always take it as an insult.
Urban, grade 10

I think feminists are maniacs that are bloqued on their own ways and being like that they're impossible to talk to, so, no one will eventually listen to them.
Town, grade 12

... or with lesbian images ...

A person who has chosen to cut off all her ties from males, refraining from sex with men, whether she be a lesbian or not.
Urban, grade 12

A feminist induces images of bra-burning lesbians. However, I guess, a feminist essentially is one who believes in equality (in the sense of opportunities, jobs, education) of women and men and who seeks out the establishment of the sex-role stereotypes embedded in our society.
Urban, grade 12

A gay girl/boy.
Urban, grade 12

Some young women provided a confused definition involving both "feminist" and "feminine" elements.

A feminist is a female that thinks that us women are not getting enough attention or enough time to show what we can do. They don't like other females that have become a housewife and is a slave in her own home. Always dress feministic, like dresses and jewellery.
Rural, grade 10

Wears dresses all the time, carries a purse, thinks they're superior to men.
Rural, grade 10

One young woman had an interesting sense of reverse "equality."

I feel that a woman can do anything or be just as high as a man. Men aren't always superior, women can abuse men too!
Town, grade 12

In addition to the question "How would you define a feminist?," many young women chose to discuss issues of sexism and discrimination in

response to the final question of the survey, "Do you have any comments or anything else you'd like to tell us?" Many young women demonstrated an acute awareness of how sexual discrimination affects their everyday lives.

I feel that girls are discriminated against a lot. Women students had trouble with male teachers, asked guidance counsellor for help. He told them they were wrong.
Rural, grade 10

A surprising number of male teachers occasionally make sexist remarks about women (women drivers, women in sports ...). Perhaps the men should learn more about the status of women.
Rural, grade 12

Give questionnaires on women to men! Some of my male friends (and teachers) need to come out of their shells. They don't realize that their comments are not only rude but sexist ... I'm really sick of it.
Rural, grade 12

A lot of Cape Breton boys and men have very chauvinistic views concerning women (girls) and like to treat girls as second class citizens.
Rural, grade 12

I think that men think that they are better than women and that the ladies should stay at home and have the babies and cook clean and that cooking and cleaning is women's work and that men should bring home the money and I think that we should try to get men to think that we are equal because we are.
Urban, grade 10

I think that women still have to work harder than men in certain job areas and in sports, etc ... to gain the recognition they deserve.
Urban, grade 12

In part of this survey it asks if I think men should be able to tell women what to do. All I have to say is who do some men think they are? They think that women do not have the same rights as them. And what they don't know is some women are smarter more educated and is able to do the same jobs as them, and sometimes even better.
Town, grade 10

All of the above young women also provide a very positive definition of a feminist, incorporating the equality-seeking or equal rights concepts, or both. It is clear that those who can identify discrimination in their own lives are supportive of the feminist movement.

A number of young women believe that the survey discriminated against men. A careful reading of the survey questions reveals that in no question do we make statements that infer a reverse discrimination. The only questions that involve men/boys are those that deal with housework and dating abuse; in these we merely ask for the *young women's* ideas and/or experiences.

I think this survey is wrong. I think women are demanding too much and believing that the men are all to blame. This survey should have been more considerate towards men. Half the time they support the family yet the women demand more. This survey were too feministic. It made us look like wimps.
Urban, grade 10

Guys aren't half as bad or guilty of things as this survey makes them out to be!! There are a lot of nice guys around.
Town, grade 10

FOOTNOTE

1 The responses to this question were coded and tabulated by hand.

INFORMATION WANTED

The kinds of information young women want is somewhat surprising (see Table 23). Over half want information on family counselling (54%)—the single most requested subject. Unfortunately, there are no questions on our survey that dealt with family problems; clearly, by stating that they want more information, young women are expressing some concern over their relationships with family members.

The information I'd like is family because with my father, I do not get along with him. In fact, I don't care for him, but you just sort of live with him. I have an older brother and sister, and I've watched them argue with him, like, every day, and I said to myself I just wasn't going to do it. And I didn't argue until the last year. Like I wanted to go to a church dance which was like chaperoned, and I wasn't allowed going, but my father would give my older brother five bucks to go to a dance, that was like with booze and everything. It just doesn't make sense, but like, you gotta know how to deal with it. I don't know how to deal with it; I just sort of shut it out and shove it to the back of my mind because there's nothing I can do about it.

Urban focus group

My parents are still ten years behind. My mother thinks that what happened in her day should still be happening now. Whereas I think that what's happening now—well, I'm used to it. If we start talking, it always ends up in screaming.

Rural focus group

I feel close to my mother and father; I just wouldn't talk to them.

Rural focus group

This is a matter for serious consideration, since family counselling (or any kind of counselling dealing with personal issues) is not readily available to large numbers of students.

There is a helpline here, but half the time when you call, there's no one there. They only have 4-hour shifts. You get a recorded message.

Rural focus group

Table 23: Information Wanted*

Family counselling	54%
Money	46%
Smoking	44%
Career counselling	43%
Abortion	39%
Dating	38%
Birth control	36%
Weight loss	33%
Sex	32%
Prescription drugs	30%
After-school jobs	22%
Parental alcohol use	19%
Sexual abuse	18%
Teenage alcohol use	17%
Sexual orientation	11%
Street drugs	9%
AIDS and STDs	6%
Other	56%

*Only yes responses to each yes/no question

The large number of young women who want additional career counselling information is an indication that guidance counsellors in the present system are not meeting students' needs adequately.

The relatively few requests by young women for information about such important and pertinent subjects as street drugs and AIDS and other STDs may indicate that the coverage of these topics within the educational system and

through the media is reaching its target. Conversely, it may mean that more education is needed to convince young people that they need education.

"Other" responses most often include young women's concerns about self-esteem, loneliness, depression, and suicide. The absence of questions dealing with these issues is a major omission of this study. The expression of these concerns is consistent with students' request for more information about family counselling issues. Both parents and teachers need to be made more aware of the extent of this dissonance.

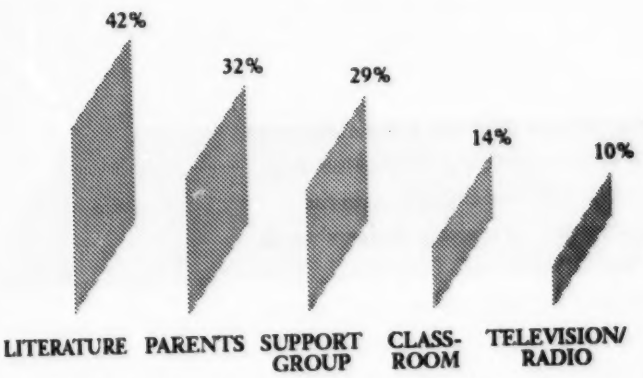
I was trying to commit suicide. I try, like, different times. I took razor blades, and I cut my arms. This is when I was going out with this guy last year, but I would never do it again, because I found out he was a big jerk. I was scared he'd break up with me. We broke up three times and got back together, and every time we broke up, I would take a razor blade or a needle—stick myself or cut myself.

Rural focus group

Some of the other subjects on which information was requested included such broad issues as child abuse, relationships, marriage/divorce/ remarriage/blended families, dating abuse, and communication with teachers/parents, as well as very specific subjects such as toxic shock syndrome and self defence.

The medium in which these young women would most like to get information is primarily through print literature (42%, see Figure 43). Pamphlets and booklets in the students' possession have the advantage of being accessible when needed as a reference, and allow the reader to remain anonymous from helping professionals. Parents and support groups are also popular (32% and 29% respectively). Surprisingly, television is one of the least popular mediums of education (8%), perhaps because it is viewed primarily as a medium of entertainment rather than learning.

Figure 43: **Information Medium Best Liked***



*Only yes responses to each yes/no question

CONCLUSIONS

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

More young women want to go to university than will be financially and academically able to do so. Students from low-income families who cannot afford tuition fees, as well as those for whom getting passing grades is a constant struggle,[1] may not be realistic in their desire to attend university. However, the older young women get, the less likely they are to say they want to go to university.

Similarly, young women today desire a broad range of professional, well-paying, and challenging occupations, but still expect, for the most part, a narrow spectrum of traditional jobs. A young women who wants to be a doctor or a police officer may decide that she will probably be a nurse or a hairdresser. Rather than going to university, she enters vocational school.

We can speculate that some of the reasons for this drop in expectation involve simply changing and maturing ideas of likes and dislikes, interests and aptitudes. There is nothing inherently problematic with being a nurse or a hairdresser, or with going to vocational school. Except of course, that these jobs, and others that are female-dominated, pay much less, have less status and opportunity for advancement, and are generally less challenging than jobs that have traditionally been done by men.

The other possible reasons for young women's drop in expectations are therefore much more serious from our perspective, and involve issues of motivation and self-esteem, subtle and blatant discouragement from teachers, guidance counsellors, and parents that may be rooted in sexism or class bias, and accidental pregnancies that necessitate a realignment of career goals, at least temporarily.

While many young women recognize that they will face a variety of barriers to attaining their goals, many also have a fatalistic attitude toward those barriers, not recognizing the power of their own choices and the strength of their own ambition. Others seem to err too much on the side of self-responsibility, and simply feel that "If I work hard, I can get what I want."

During young women's high school years many are actively involved in planning for their futures. Students in grades 10 and 12 have only a little way to go before high school graduation. Shortly, they will have to deal with choosing vocational schools, colleges, or universities, fields of study, and courses, or they will enter the limited job market accessible to those with only a high school diploma. The choices they will make will have repercussions that will probably last a lifetime. This study offers us only a hint of understanding the complex decision-making process that young women undertake.

The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women recommends that further study be funded by the provincial government to examine young women's educational and career aspirations to determine the internal and external reasons for their diminishing expectations as they age.

A limitation of this study is that young women who have already left high school are not included in the sample. Doubtless they would bring to this survey a very different analysis of their experiences and expectations in terms of education, employment, sexuality, relationships, and self-care. The numbers of Black and Native students included in the sample, while statistically representative, do not provide us with enough numbers to analyze these groups in terms of particular trends. Also, the number of teen mothers in the study, and the characteristics unique to them, remain unexplored. The Advisory Council recommends that special populations of young women—in particular, Black and Native young women, early school leavers, and teen mothers—be studied to determine similarities and differences between them and the general survey population.

Many of the comments students make about the guidance program or about individual guidance counsellors are both shocking and alarming. While almost three-quarters of the young women in the study have been to a guidance counsellor, it is impossible for us to know how many went voluntarily. And while a majority of these students are satisfied at the service they received, we do not know whether that service involved actual discussion and counselling, or merely the signing of the required form. Some of those who are not happy with their counselling experience felt belittled, betrayed, and discriminated against. Others simply feel that they had wasted their time.

Young women from low-income families, or who have mothers and/or fathers who are poorly educated,[2] or who live in isolated, rural areas of the province, may have particular difficulty achieving their educational and employment goals. Schools must work to overcome the barriers faced by disadvantaged young women. It is a task of guidance to correct imbalances, not perpetuate them.

The Council calls for an in-depth review of the guidance program in Nova Scotia schools; to see where it is and is not meeting the needs of students and how it can be improved. In particular, sexual, racial, and class biases on the part of the counsellors, and in the programs offered, should be examined and eradicated. This investigation should concentrate primarily on the voices and opinions of the students, as clients or potential clients of guidance, since it is the students who create the need for the service.

The priority that individual principals or school boards place on guidance services makes a significant difference to the effectiveness of a counselling program in any given school. We recommend that the Department of Education develop province-wide policies that all boards and principals will be required to follow in the establishment of a comprehensive guidance program for students.

SEXUALITY

Young women are desperate for accurate and straightforward information about sexuality and birth control. Over half of the young women in this study are already sexually active, and almost one-third of them do not consistently protect themselves from accidental pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. Many concerns are expressed over the quality and depth of the sex education classes offered as a component of the required course "Personal Development and Relationships (PDR)." We recommend that teachers who are delivering the PDR program in the classroom be required to demonstrate a sensitivity to the issues involved, and an openness to debate and discuss differing points of view. In addition, mandatory workshops, seminars, or training sessions must prepare teachers to deal with the subject in a more comprehensive manner.

The Advisory Council recommends that young women (and men) be supplied with information about sexual feelings, working out problems in sexual relationships, and assessing the sexual history of a potential sex partner, in the context of the PDR program.[3] None of this material is normally covered in the course at present. This information, as well as accessible, reliable birth control must be made available to students in every part of Nova Scotia. It is precisely those areas where school boards provide students with the opportunity to discuss sexual activity in the classroom that have among the lowest rates of teen pregnancy.[4]

Up to one in ten young women may be using birth control unnecessarily. Some may start taking the pill or may have an IUD inserted "just in case"; others may be prescribed birth control pills by their physicians for reasons other than the prevention of pregnancy—for the control of acne or for "menstrual irregularity," for example. The Advisory Council recommends that investigation be undertaken to determine the number of young women who may be taking

potentially dangerous hormones needlessly, to document the health risks involved, and to investigate other methods of care for these problems.

Dealing with a crisis pregnancy is a reality for many young women today, and one that has educational, employment, and social repercussions that cannot adequately be assessed by pregnant teens, simply because they receive absolutely no preparation for such an eventuality in their lives. Considering the numbers of young women who engage in unprotected sexual intercourse, there must be many teenagers who deal with the stress of the possibility of a crisis pregnancy on an ongoing basis. Many of these young women do not feel they can tell their parents about their sexual activity, let alone a possible pregnancy.

Young mothers face additional stress and increased obstacles that they must be made aware of before making a decision regarding the termination or continuation of a crisis pregnancy. More and more young women are choosing to keep their babies, although there are no support systems in place to ensure that they and their child receive financial support and the best possible emotional care. The Council recommends that high school students be provided with a safe, non-judgmental forum, within the school curriculum, in which to discuss the pros and cons of having an abortion, keeping the baby, or relinquishing their child for adoption.

RELATIONSHIPS

The majority of young women in this study believe that a steady boyfriend does not have the right to pressure them into anything they do not want to do, although a few think that boyfriends do have a right to tell them what to do in certain areas or regarding specific issues in their lives, such as who they can date, what to do in the event of a crisis pregnancy, what to wear, or how much they should weigh.

Abuse suffered by young women in dating relationships is prevalent: between 11% and 32% of young women experience emotional, sexual, or physical abuse by their boyfriends. We recommend that dating abuse issues also be incorporated into the PDR curriculum. In the same way that elementary age children in some jurisdictions are being taught the difference between "good touching" and "bad touching," teens can ***learn*** that dating abuse is unacceptable, it is not their fault, and they do not have to put up with it in their relationships. Support services must be set up by transition houses to provide outreach to young women who may be involved in abusive relationships.[5]

Young women's expectation of marriage is high, in terms of the number of young women who say they will get married, their faith in the power of "talking out" any problems, as well as in their low expectation of divorce. Despite the fact that separation and divorce occur at much higher rates now than a generation ago, young women have altered their expectations of these possibilities only slightly. The financial as well as emotional repercussions of divorce are often viewed unrealistically.

Motherhood is still assumed unquestioningly for most young women, and respondents expect to have larger families than are currently the norm. While a majority of young women are making plans to work for most of their adult lives, with a minimal break for childrearing, they have little sense of the difficulties of juggling work and family responsibilities, and of the repercussions of taking even a few years away from the paid workforce.

Over half of the young women in this study optimistically state that they will share the housework and childcare with their partner. The possibility of single parenthood seems remote, and the reality of the gender division of household labour, where there are two parents in a family, does not appear to affect their expectations.

There is also little recognition of the limits to the availability and affordability of childcare. It

may not pay to work in most female-dominated occupations if there are two or more children who require daycare services. Some young women maintain often unrealistic expectations of relatives looking after their children, despite the fact that fewer and fewer older women are in the financial position to stay home and look after grandchildren.

Women's participation in the labour force has increased dramatically in the past 30 years. Many young women want to work while their children are growing up; others will have to work because of financial necessity, whether they are in a one- or two-earner family. They will require increasing support services, such as day care centres, to enable them to compete with men in the job market, if they so choose.

SELF-CARE

The respondents are quite sophisticated in their knowledge of healthy foods and the importance of exercise, but their behaviour does not necessarily reflect that knowledge. Young women need information on body image to promote a respect for their bodies as they are and to counteract our society's image of the "perfect" woman's body. Lack of self-confidence in terms of body shape and size does not come directly from external sources, but rather combines interwoven concepts of self-identity, media messages, friends' and boyfriends' preferences, and so on. Young women's sense of personal identity and attractiveness are clearly easily shaken.

Similarly, self-esteem issues are involved in young women's use of cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs. This study deals only very superficially with young women's use of these substances. What remains to be explored, in a Nova Scotia context, are the roles drugs and alcohol play in their lives, the pressures they experience from peers to participate in smoking, drinking, and doing drugs, the social repercussions they face if they do not participate, and the most effective and supportive way of teaching them to say "no."

FEMINISM

Sexism is recognized by only a very few young women as an obstacle to attaining their chosen career, indeed, in all other areas of their lives. There is still a lot of confusion, ambivalence, and anger at the term "feminist" among young women today. Equality-seeking women's groups must work toward a greater understanding of the term, among the general population and particularly among young women.

FOOTNOTES

1 We do not mean to suggest that barely passing is necessarily indicative of lower academic ability. Students may do poorly in school for a multitude of reasons, including lack of motivation and encouragement, boredom, learning disability, inappropriate programming, or personal problems such as despression or stress.

2 Almost half (47%) of adult Nova Scotians aged 25-64 have less than a high school education. Statistics Canada Census Data 1986, *The Nation: Schooling by Major Field of Study*, Catalogue 93-110. Thirty-eight per cent of the mothers and 43% of the fathers of the young women in this study have less than a high school education.

3 Please see our *Report on the Status of Sexuality Education and Family Planning*, 1990, for a more complete discussion of our views and recommendations pertaining to sex education in Nova Scotia schools.

4 Maureen Jessop Orton and Ellen Rosenblat, *Adolescent Pregnancy in Ontario: Progress in Prevention*, Report No. 2, Toronto: Planned Parenthood Ontario, February 1986.

5 Some transition houses in the province have already begun to set up such programs. Clearly, additional government funding is required to enable already overworked staff to provide additional services.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women recommends:

1) that further study be funded by the provincial government to examine young women's educational and career aspirations to determine the internal and external reasons for their diminishing expectations as they age;

2) that special populations of young women—in particular, Black and Native young women, early school leavers, and teen mothers—be studied to determine similarities and differences between them and the general survey population;

3) that the Department of Education conduct an in-depth review of the guidance program in Nova Scotia schools to see where it is and is not meeting the needs of students and how it can be improved. In particular, sexual, racial, and class biases on the part of the counsellors, and in the programs offered, should be examined and eradicated;

4) that the Department of Education develop province-wide policies that all boards and principals will be required to follow in the establishment of a comprehensive guidance program for students;

5) that teachers who are delivering the PDR program in the classroom be required to demonstrate a sensitivity to the issues involved, and an openness to debate and discuss differing points of view. In addition, mandatory workshops, seminars, or training sessions must prepare teachers to deal with the subject in a more comprehensive manner;

6) that young women (and men) be supplied with information about sexual feelings, working out problems in sexual relationships, and assessing the sexual history of a potential sex partner, in the context of the Personal Relationships and Development (PDR) program;

7) that investigation be undertaken to determine the number of young women who may be taking potentially dangerous hormones needlessly, to document the health risks involved, and to investigate other methods of care for these problems;

8) that high school students be provided with a safe, non-judgmental forum, within the school curriculum, in which to discuss the pros and cons of having an abortion, keeping the baby, or relinquishing their child for adoption;

9) that dating abuse issues be incorporated into the PDR curriculum;

10) that support services for young women who experience dating abuse be set up by transition houses, with appropriate additional funding from the Department of Community Services;

11) that equality-seeking women's groups work toward a greater understanding of the term "feminist" among the general population and particularly among young women.